

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHERS

III—TURGENEV

by NOEL ANNAN

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by ROBIN IRONSIDE

THE TRUE STORY OF DICK WHITTINGTON

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HENRY WILLIAMSON

Henry Williamson says he believes in the old saying that a man changes every seven years. In 1914 he went to war, fought in the trenches south of Ypres, and took part in the Christmas Day fraternisation which, he declares, altered his entire way of thinking. Seven years later, in 1921, at the age of twenty-four, he went to live in a Devon cottage near the coast. The story of what befell there is told in his new book, **THE SUN IN THE SANDS**.

Seven years later, in 1928, he was awarded the Hawthornden Prize for Literature. In the succeeding seven years most of his work, he says, was poor stuff; but that phase ended with the publication in 1935 of **SALAR THE SALMON**. Seeking what seemed to be a necessary change of life and scene, he migrated the following year to Norfolk, having set himself to reclaim a derelict tract of land. He hoped by hard physical work to simplify his mental life. **THE STORY OF A NORFOLK FARM** tells the story of the new beginning. For seven years he worked as pioneer and labourer, and the farm was classed an A farm.

With this achievement, coinciding with the seven-year phase, Henry Williamson felt the urge to write again, equal with his fervour in 1921. A sequel to the farming book was no sooner completed than the third and final volume of this Norfolk trilogy was begun and finished. These volumes will be published some time in the future.

Messrs. Faber & Faber acquired the rights of several Devon books, with a view to reprinting them; but the author wanted to rewrite them first. Within a month, **TALES OF A DEVON VILLAGE** and **LIFE IN A DEVON VILLAGE** appeared in our office, for publication (it is hoped) some time in 1945. These volumes will supersede the old books originally published with the titles *The Village Book* and *The Labouring Life*. Reinforced by his practical farming experience, Mr. Williamson told us that he believes they are his best work. Other new books were begun and ended in the burst of renewed literary activity. **THE SUN IN THE SANDS** was followed by the story of his life to the success of **TARKA THE OTTER** in 1928, and the move to Shallowford and the trout stream.

Meanwhile, the book of the moment is **THE SUN IN THE SANDS**. It tells the story of the young writer whose emotions involve him in various unusual situations, with various 'characters', both men and women, who live vividly in the chronicle. The scene moves from an unspoiled Devon where a motor-car was an unusual sight and a bather has miles of sands to himself day after day in summer, to the heavy ploughlands of Essex, and thence to the High Pyrenees, ending with the author walking over the battlefields.

Faber & Faber, 8s. 6d.

THE SUN IN THE SANDS

HORIZON

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A MACMILLAN AUTHOR

Edmund Blunden

Changes of reputation in modern English poetry have been rapid and perplexing. The 'Georgians' of twenty-five and twenty years ago have been particularly subject to anti-climax. Mr. Edmund Blunden, whose work began to appear in locally printed pamphlets in the autumn of 1914, and came into prominence when 'The Shepherd' was honoured with the 'Hawthornden' prize in 1922, has, however, increased steadily in reputation.

A large selection of his poetry 'Poems 1914-1930' is regarded as one of the versebooks of these days that will almost certainly survive into the future. Since 1930 the author has written many poems which (as, for instance, his elegy on King George V and stanzas on the avoidance of war in 1938) obtained wide circulation and notice. His admirers have perhaps set greatest store by his interpretations of the English country scene and tradition: yet he has produced a wide range of subject, form and treatment, and his later work is constantly concerned with the spirit of man and questions of fresh experience, advance and triumph.

Edmund Blunden, who is a Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Merton College, Oxford, wrote one of the best of the books about the last war, *Undertones of War*. His two volumes of poetry published since 1940 are called *Poems 1930-1940*, and *Shells By A Stream*. He has also since the war began published a fine prose study of *Thomas Hardy*, and an admirable portrait of the English character and scene, *Cricket Country*, which Collins issued last year.

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A. S. J. TESSIMOND
SAVING GRACE

Fish do not smile, nor birds: their faces are not
Equipped for it. A smiling dog's the illusion
And wish-fulfilment of its owner. Cats wear
Permanent smiles inspired by mere politeness
But human animals at times forget their
Godlike responsibilities; the tension
Slackens, the weasel-sharp intentness falters;
Muscles relax; the eyes refrain from peering
Aside, before and after; and the burden
Of detail drops from forehead; cheekline gently
Creases; the mouth wide-flowers; the stiff mask softens;
And Man bestows his simple, unambitious,
Unservile, unselfseeking, undeceptive,
Uncorrupt gift, the grace-note of a smile.

PAUL DEHN

'THE SWEET WAR MAN IS DEAD'

Their stricken bones lie all about the world,
Who were my friends in England; and the law
Permits me to have loved them, who lack flesh.
Eyes winked, once, in the skull. Ribs that are curled
Under the sand, under the sea, under the hairy paw
Of Death who sent the flies, who sent the fish,
Had once a heart. Pluck me that heart, now,
From bird's beak, eel-gut and the maggot's mouth;
Put back those eyes, where the eternal tide
Sings in the sockets; on the crackpot brow
Pencil the leaf-light shadow-lines of youth;
For these bare bones were children, when they died.
So must I mourn among the gluttoned gulls,
Cry to a shark, weep with the fat, white worm
Who turns and nods to me across the stones.
They feasted and are full. Only these skulls
Ring emptily and need no requiem,
Being at peace. Lie easy, now, poor bones.

NOEL ANNAN

NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHERS

III—TURGENEV

IN majesty and mystery, enthroned on Mount Olympus, the god-like masters of the art of fiction hold their high Court: great Tolstoy, lit by the radiance of his profound and varied experience, foretells man's destiny; with him sit Dostoievsky, who penetrates deeper than any into the human soul, the strange, poetic genius, Emily Brontë, exuberant Dickens, labyrinthine Proust. There also reign Flaubert and Jane Austen, receiving the supplications of the votaries of Form and Art. Beneath their gaze the critics flit for ever interceding for some author dead or living that he may be granted a place among the foothills of the heavenly mountain. Turgenev once was a god—or so they say; but now his time is past; his day is done; his charm, his art are relegated to the second rank. The discerning today judge *The Torrents of Spring* to be his finest work which the immortals, however, consign relentlessly to the Apochrypha; for though both lovely and moving, it cannot claim to be a Book of Revelation whose limitless profundities and mysteries eternally feed the soul of man. Few call upon Turgenev's name. At the altars of Henry James and George Eliot a circumscribed but select band of worshippers gather to burn incense: no longer at his. Lacking the prodigious power and range of his erratic contemporaries or the analytical, experimental genius of the great novelists of this century, he has not been cast from his throne so much as politely removed and set in an inferior though distinguished niche.

If we were to judge Turgenev by his collected works, it might be difficult to reverse this verdict. Yet *Fathers and Children* is perhaps the most perfect example of the novel as a form of art, the book one would press into the hand of someone who had never in his life read a novel. But it is a delicate transparent vessel. *Fathers and Children* is dwarfed if placed beside *War and Peace* or *La Comédie Humaine*. It is short, introduces a bare ten characters and covers but nine months in time. Moreover though like Flaubert and Jane Austen, his range is confined

and he endeavours to create in each novel an artistic unity, he differs from them in one important respect. We know at once what is their conception of life, the standards by which they appraise human nature. It is not so with Turgenev. He had no single view of life. His intellect was not (to use an appalling phrase now much in fashion) fully integrated. He did not know for certain where he stood or what he thought, he could neither judge man nor preach to him. Unsupported by any self-sufficing philosophy which would reveal the distinction between appearance and reality, he contented himself with arranging the facts of existence and leaving the reader to explain them.

This state of mind is more usually found in poets; and it is indeed best expressed by Keats. On two separate occasions when reflecting upon the character of Dilke (the grandfather of the late Victorian politician) Keats wrote:

Dilke is a man who cannot feel that he has a personal identity unless he has made up his mind about everything. The only means of strengthening one's intellect is to make up one's mind about nothing—to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thoughts. Not a select party.¹

and again :

It struck me what quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean *negative capability*, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.²

Turgenev was an artist, and for an artist *negative capability* is a positive advantage. No doubt it limits his achievement. He cannot explore the intricate processes of the mind, nor can we enter into the personalities of his characters, search out and analyse their emotions. On the other hand the form of his novels is distorted not by indignation, earnest convictions, obsessions. Turgenev is free from these torments. He was able to concentrate on his craft, and thereby produce by selection and arrangement the greatest emotional effect on the reader. Everything is in harmony. The characters, plot, incidents and substance of *Fathers and Children* grow naturally one out of the other to form an organic unity. Whatever he found to be irrelevant to plot or character he omitted. The servants, peasants and minor characters are never new and vital creations, twice as alive as the hero in half a page, like Dickens's. Their personality only exists either to clarify that of the main protagonists or to illustrate

¹Letter to George Keats 17–24th September 1819.

²Letter to George and Thomas Keats 22nd December 1817.

the author's argument: the motif shifted into the minor key. His characters never cross their legs, sip their tea or throw open a window without revealing or confirming some facet of their personality. He was an Impressionist. A line here, a streak of paint there, and suddenly a whole scene, a conversation becomes more alive and illuminating than in the most painstaking and elaborate canvas. In fewer words than any other novelist he can communicate his meaning to the reader, and we apprehend his meaning not with our head, but in our heart. When, as in reading a great novel, we are so moved by some passage that we pause and look up from the page, we do not ponder and say, How true. We remain silent. A strange calm and sense of mystery settles upon us. We might be reading simple lyric poetry. For Turgenev is not only a painter, he is a poet. His characters never explain what they think in logical phraseology, they nearly always use metaphor, images and allegories. They break off in the middle of a thought leaving the reader to complete it. Moreover, Turgenev heightens this effect by rapid transitions from the particular to the general. These qualities are not sensible of rigorous analysis or even of quotation; but with regard to the last, let us watch young Arkady Kirsanov and the timid but observant Katya, who is talking about her sister:

'She's very proud . . . no I didn't mean that . . . she values her independence a great deal.'

'Who doesn't value it?' asked Arkady, and the thought flashed through his mind, 'What good is it?' 'What good is it?' occurred to Katya to wonder too. When young people are on friendly terms, they are constantly stumbling on the same ideas.

We are watching Arkady and Katya no longer. A score of different emotions, like radiant bubbles, rise within us, expand and dissolve before we return to the story. What of man's independence? Does it exist? And if it does will this much-desired quality make him contented? Has Arkady ever in his life been independent and will not the last vestige of his independence vanish if he marries this demure maiden? We are not left long in doubt. Soon after Arkady has left her, Katya is greeted by her elder sister, Anna Sergeyevna Odintsov:

'They have sent some shoes from the town; go and try them on . . . You never think enough about it, and you have such charming little feet! Your hands are nice too . . . though they're large; so you must make the most of your little feet. But then you are not vain.'

Anna Sergeyevna went further along the path with a light rustle of her beautiful gown; Katya got up from the grass and taking her Heine with her, went away too—but not to try on her shoes.

'Charming little feet!' she thought, as she slowly and lightly mounted the stone steps of the terrace, which were burning with the heat of the sun; 'charming little feet you call them . . . Well, he shall be at them.'

But all at once a feeling of shame came upon her and she ran swiftly upstairs.

From these passages one can see that Turgenev is not afraid of commenting himself. Nowadays critics discourage gnomic utterances, they are said to break the illusion of the novelist's art; and to be sure, one can swallow only the very best gnome. No higher praise can be given to Turgenev than to say that his own comments on life are as powerful and revealing as Dostoievsky's. Sometimes they are simple statements of fact:

Arkady was feeling that causeless melancholy which is only known to very young people.

Sometimes they appear as the first strokes in sketching a character: like the sentence which is the key to the complicated, fascinating Mme. Odintsov.

Like all women who have not succeeded in loving, she wanted something without herself knowing what.

Sometimes they express emotions which modern novelists either despise or are incapable of illustrating such as innocent youthful love. When Arkady, amazed at his own temerity and Katya's acceptance of his offer, clasps the young girl in his arms and sees the tears start to her eyes, Turgenev adds:

No one who has not seen those tears in the eyes of the beloved, knows yet to what a point, faint with shame and gratitude, a man may be happy on earth.

And lastly, Turgenev's works are pervaded by a potent melancholy, which we ourselves experience and yet for some reason believe to be vaguely discreditable; the fragrance of nostalgia. Nostalgia for our fading youth, for wasted time, for our family and forsaken friends, for Russia. When Arkady after three years at the University sleeps his first night at home Turgenev tells us:

Sweet it is to fall asleep in one's own home, in the familiar bed under the quilt worked by loving hands, perhaps a dear nurse's hands, those tender, untiring hands. Arkady remembered Yegorovna, and sighed and wished her peace in heaven . . . For himself he made no prayer.

Such passages in their simplicity and economy recall lines from Homer: Homer who understood the pathos of a father's ambition for his son, the pride of motherhood—Odysseus' mother who died heartbroken at his absence, missing her son's cunning and tenderness—the longing for home and memories of the days that are past, the years that are no more. Turgenev sees life as a

B

poet; of the meaning of these emotions, their cause, their effect, he cannot speak.

As an architect, he was gifted with a perfect sense of form. The construction of his novel is simple and economical. There are two main characters, Bazarov and his young friend and disciple, Arkady Kirsanov. They visit three households, each of which contains two important characters. The caste is small, the change of scenes few, the lighting ingeniously contrived. *Fathers and Children* is indeed a drama in five acts. Each act ends with a climax and the climaxes echo each other. Act I closes with Bazarov leaving the Kirsanovs' house after an acrimonious political argument with Arkady's uncle, the aristocratic Pavel Petrovich: he leaves it at the end of Act IV after a duel with Pavel. The second act closes with Bazarov's tortured declaration of love to Anna Sergeyevna; when later he quits that house for good it is after he has heard of Arkady's happy engagement to Katya. Finally, when Bazarov's poor father falls desolate and broken beside his son's deathbed, we remember him saying at the end of the third act when Bazarov left home, 'He has cast us off, he has forsaken us'. So satisfying are the proportions of this novel, that we actually apprehend its form aesthetically all the time we are reading, just as listening to a Bach Concerto we eagerly await, while transported by the development, the final *tutti*. *Fathers and Children* is almost unique among novels in possessing this quality. For as Mr. Lubbock points out in the *Craft of Fiction*, the novel is an evanescent creature: no sooner held than gone, so that we fully appreciate only by critical analysis the complex structure of *Wuthering Heights*, the inventions of Gide, the patterns of Virginia Woolf. When we at last turn from Turgenev's Grecian temple, sublime in its perfection of line, it is this sense of unity and proportion which remains longest in the mind, when its characters have become wraiths and the great issues which it raises, forgotten and recalled only as emotions which once we felt and now no longer can remember why.

There has never been any doubt, however, about Turgenev's supremacy as a craftsman. But what faith is held, what prayers ascend within the temple? Is his vision of life worthy of its artistic integument?

'Not a select party.' During the last ten years we have seen

what difficulties beset artists who live in an age of political upheaval. Those who would in other times have preached an illuminating creed of their own, throw themselves into the political struggle and submerge their identity to serve a party, write to achieve some limited end; others fall silent; while those remote beings who ignore the present state of society stand accused of cowardice or inconsistency. Turgenev was too civilized and interested in ideas to ignore the rise of the liberal movement in Russia. He was a liberal, he had emancipated his serfs and, being Russia's leading novelist, he was acclaimed by the progressives as one of their number.

But, alas, he did not see the world like dynamic politicians in black and white. He was a mass of maddening contradictions. The patron of young Russian writers, he lived the greater part of his life outside Russia. Oppressors and narrow moralists were subjected to his irony, yet he was condemned by Tolstoy as a creature of feeble moral fibre, whose veins were filled with milk and water; Dostoevsky caricatured him contemptuously in *The Possessed*; and the worst fears of the progressive party were confirmed on the publication of *Fathers and Children*. The very title of the book had led them to believe that the old reactionaries would be scarified. They suffered a resounding disappointment. Turgenev was not writing a political pamphlet. He was incapable of shepherding individuals into pens and branding them as belonging to this or that flock¹. He satirises Good Form, starched, cultured Pavel Petrovich; but he is equally amused by the pretensions of the young, and so that we will not miss the implications of his irony, he presents two members of the intelligentsia, Bazarov and Arkady, who are really debased and vulgarized versions of the dreadful, advanced blue-stocking, Mme. Kukshina, and her callow hanger-on Sitnikov.

Turgenev might for personal reasons alone have been expected to write bitterly about parents. Like Samuel Butler he suffered desperately in childhood. His mother was a violent despot, his father elegant, remote, proud. He hardly ever saw them except when they presided over his punishments. He was whipped continually, deprived of his dinner day after day. 'He could remember walking in the garden and swallowing with desperate

¹ And when in *Virgin Soil* he tried to make amends and wrote to please the progressives, he failed.

pleasure the salt tears as they flowed from his eyes.' Yet when he came to write of the relationship between parents and their children, it was with the detachment of one who appreciated the difficulties of both generations. We pity Bazarov's garrulous old father and superstitious mother both so pathetically afraid of their brilliant son; and Turgenev makes it plain that he thinks naïve Arkady as comical as his father Nikolay, who quotes Pushkin and plays the 'cello and whose good-hearted inefficiency and generosity to his peasants, who cheat him in return, are ruining the estate. Moreover, he shows how unconsciously cruel the young are, and how, while convinced of their own originality are often utterly unoriginal. Good-tempered Arkady in his devotion to his friend, and in the end to his family and class, is merely his father in another key and tempo. In thirty years' time, Arkady will have become his father.

We will not therefore expect Turgenev's hero, Bazarov, 'my favourite child . . . on whom I lavished all the colours at my disposal,' Bazarov, the medical student, the Nihilist, to be the hero which the intelligentsia hoped he would be. To understand Bazarov we must study the history of nineteenth-century thought and, in particular, the impact of Science on intellectual and moral ideas; Science which set itself up as the new alchemy by which all truth could be discovered; Science which threatened to supplant the Humanities and become the chief nourisher of youth, which wrung from Matthew Arnold that mellifluous defence of all he believed most valuable in education:

Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so severe!

'There are our young barbarians all at play!' And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, the perfection—to beauty in a word, which is only truth seen from another side—nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen?

Why Tübingen? The university of Tübingen had achieved notoriety for expelling Strauss on the publication in 1835 of his *Leben Jesu*. Twenty years later the scientist, Ludwig Büchner too was deprived of his chair on the appearance of his famous *Kraft und Stoff*. Büchner declared that Force and Matter are the sole realities and from the study of physics and chemistry alone could the laws of Nature be deduced. These scientific laws no God could suspend. No phenomenon could exist without matter, force alone

was immortal and the soul an illusion. Unlike the agnostic English scientists, Büchner was an atheist and a materialist. He wrote in a lively style, was widely read, and his book passed through fifteen editions to win a European reputation. It was this book which Arkady, on Bazarov's advice, pressed with pitying condescension into his father's hand while removing the volume of Pushkin which he was reading.

Science for the German was an intellectual conception; but in the mind of the Russian, Bazarov, it becomes a method of criticizing life, of analysing institutions, politics, human beings. When we are young, the world seems full of disgusting shams and hypocrisies which our elders tolerate. Some of us suffer and do nothing—and become in time like our elders; others, however, are determined to destroy these rotten ideals and institutions, believing that a juster, nobler society will arise. Bazarov is a destroyer, a revolutionary; but because scientific analysis can only expose fallacy and gives no teleological explanation of the universe he is forced to become a Nihilist. He is able only to dissect the whole system of pious fraud, including Pavel Petrovich's liberal principles. The sanctity of the family, the dignity of the peasant, the utility of democratic institutions. He regards Art as another bromide which the cringing bourgeois take to deaden the pain produced by the perception of truth. Love, the supreme illusion, should likewise be ruthlessly eliminated as unscientific nonsense. But Science has taught him to be honest, and he knows that no formula exists for changing human nature. The world will always remain what it is; no political system can save it.

Once again Turgenev holds the scales. He does not hide Bazarov's coarseness, rudeness, his disregard for anyone else's feelings, his lack of social graces, nor his innate cruelty. Above all he emphasizes his divine conceit, that arrogant conceit which gives the young intellectual the power to create, to lead. And to do this he must spurn the experience and culture of the past which, though it might enlighten and civilize him, would smother his vitality. But Turgenev makes us realize that Bazarov cannot be judged by homely moral standards. For Bazarov is a noble, heroic creation; the force of his magnetism is indescribable; and his determination to strike to the roots of human existence, cost what it may, raises him above the sphere of other mortal beings. His

remorseless honesty includes himself. He admits his own faults, his spleen, his envy, his cynicism. 'If you've made up your mind to mow everything down, don't spare your own legs.' He is true to his analysis of life. When, overcome by desire, he is forced to confess his love for Anna Sergeyevna, he reasserts his iron self-control, and as far as it is given to a man to master this emotion, garottes his passion and buries its body. His love is to be resurrected only when he lies dying. He believes in the power of his intelligence, but does not delude himself about the position he holds in the pattern of the universe.

'... my mother's happy too; her day's so chockful of duties of all sorts, and sighs and groans that she's no time even to think of herself; while I . . .'

'While you?'

'I think; here I lie under a haystack . . . The tiny space I occupy is so infinitely small in comparison with the rest of space in which I am not, and which has nothing to do with me; and the period of time in which it is my lot to live is so petty beside the eternity in which I have not been, and shall not be . . . And in this atom, this mathematical point, the blood is circulating, the brain is working and wanting something . . . Isn't it loathsome? Isn't it petty?'

Such a man sees through the enthusiasms of his disciple; he knows Arkady to be the sweet-natured unaffected fellow he is, at heart devoted to his family and all he affects to despise. And Bazarov says to him:

'And now, I say again, goodbye, for it's useless to deceive ourselves—we are parting for good and you know that yourself . . . you have acted sensibly, you're not made for our bitter, rough, lonely existence. There's no dash, no hate in you, but you've the daring of youth and the fire of youth. Your sort, you gentry, can never get beyond refined submission or refined indignation, and that's no good. You won't fight—and yet you fancy yourselves gallant chaps—but we mean to fight. Oh well! Our dust would get in your eyes, our mud would bespatter you, but yet you're not up to our level, you're admiring yourselves unconsciously, you like to abuse yourselves; but we're sick of that—we want to smash other people! You're a capital fellow: but you're a sugary, liberal snob for all that . . .'

In this speech one hears all the contempt of the true revolutionary for those upper-class intellectuals who are always hawking, analysing, distinguishing, those liberals (of which Turgenev recognized himself as one) bound by moral scruples and delicate sensibilities. Yet what is one to do if one is afflicted with scruples and sensibilities? 'Except for Bazarov's views on Art, I share

almost all his convictions' wrote Turgenev. But Conviction, the product of the intellect, is a pale straw-coloured flame compared to the furnace of the emotions. All the characters in *Fathers and Children* wrestle with the question of whether they should be ruled by their head or their heart. And Turgenev gives his answer. It is useless to strive against one's natural disposition and aspire to be more than oneself. As Katya tells Arkady, they are tame animals and Bazarov is wild. Anna Sergeyevna, whose strange dilemmas Turgenev most exquisitely portrays, knows that although Bazarov fascinates her, life with him would be impossible. Each human being's impression of reality is born in his heart. However true intellectually, other people's conclusions about life may appear to be, they are false for us, unless we feel them to be true. To be true to one's heart is all that man can hope to be. That is why moral or political judgments about people are in the last analysis worthless. We are what we are and we think what we feel. And this indeed is the root of Bazarov's view of life:

'You talk like your uncle. There are no great principles—you've not made out that even yet! There are feelings. Everything depends on them.'

'How so?'

'Why, I, for instance take up a negative attitude, by virtue of my sensations; I like to deny—my brain's made on that plan, and that's all about it! Why do I like chemistry? Why do you like apples?—by virtue of our sensations. It's all the same thing. Deeper than that man will never penetrate.'

Bazarov, though a revolutionary, is too honest to lie and assert that all men should think and act as he. He is a scientist first and, unwittingly, arrives at the same conclusions as the great annihilator Hume. How wise was Marx to deplore the empirical methods of Darwin and Hume and provide in Dialectical Materialism a creed in which the faithful could believe: a new methodology of thought which could be used to justify every new twist and turn of political action.

Finally Turgenev found himself unable to answer the last problem of human existence. He was an acknowledged agnostic, and as such he created the scene of Bazarov's death, when the old father, though he has brought the priest to his son's bed, is seized on his death by frenzied despair. "I said I should rebel," he shrieked hoarsely with his face inflamed and distorted, shaking his fist in the air as though threatening somebody, "and I rebel, I rebel". Yet in the final epilogue to the book he describes how Bazarov's wretched parents totter forth and fall on their son's grave.

Can it be that their prayers, their tears are fruitless? Can it be that love, sacred, devoted love is not all-powerful? Oh, no! However passionate, sinning and rebellious, the heart hidden in the tomb, the flowers growing over it peep serenely at us with their innocent eyes; they tell us not of eternal peace alone, of that great peace of 'indifferent' nature; they tell us too, of eternal reconciliation and life without end.

Nor should we be surprised. For, earlier in the book, Turgenev recounts the story of Pavel Petrovich's obsession in his youth about the Princess R——. Tortured by her enigmatic personality, he had given the Princess a ring with a sphinx engraved on the stone. 'What's that,' she asked, 'a sphinx?' 'Yes,' he murmured, 'and that sphinx is you.' Years later, when she and her love for him were dead, the ring was returned to him. 'She had drawn lines in the shape of a cross over the sphinx and sent him word that the solution of the enigma was—the cross.' Did Turgenev's reason assure him of the impossibility of a life to come, and did his heart, the source which is the fountain of all art, persuade him otherwise?

We do not know. But we can no longer doubt the depth of his sensibility or his perception of life. Being in 'uncertainties, mysteries, doubts', without any conviction of the meaning or right true end of life, he was filled with compassion for suffering man. He does not stand above his characters like Tolstoy, or apart from them like George Eliot or even beside them like Hardy—all equally compassionate for the lot of their fellow beings. One feels that Turgenev might have been any one of his characters, that their ridiculous characteristics were his, that he, too, found himself in their pathetic plight. For in *Fathers and Children* Turgenev is concerned with the greatest issues in life; with the conflict in man's soul between his reason and his emotions and with man's relation to the universe.

Not once does his imagination fail; and in the final scene of his hero's life, his poetic inspiration illuminates with miraculous power the cosmic processes of man's destiny. As we stand beside Bazarov's bedside and see the life shaken out of his mortal frame by the sweats and agonies of high fever; as he genius disintegrates, and that great power which sets him above the beasts, his reason, struggles against the scientific processes men call death; as his corrupting flesh is shovelled into the earth, and the cells of his brain, his capable hands, those eyes which flashed with indignation against injustice, moulder in the ooze; when his high designs, his mounting aspirations, his dignity, nobility and courage

become as nothing and like that sepulchred body which lodged them once, are overwhelmed by the passage of the years—while each season the flowers bloom as fragrantly, the larks sing as merrily and the majestic clouds pass by over the arched sky, and all the time ‘indifferent Nature’ regards men no more than the insects which crawl over blades of grass: then we are transported to another world and view this globe on which we move with other vision; we watch pitiful finite man; we comprehend his absurd vanity, his boundless conceit, his noble pride—a poor individual lost in a fraction of time among the revolving generations; born to no circumscribed pattern yet straitly ordained for predestined fate to plunge into the seas of drear oblivion, forgotten, mourned no more: and then, indeed, we hear, as Bazarov lies dying, those mystical and mysterious words at the close of *King Lear*.

Is this the promised end?
Or image of that horror,
Fall and cease.

ROBIN IRONSIDE VICTOR PASMORE

THE responsive critic of painting would not be conditioned to expect the productions of modern art to be distinguished by the quality of taste—a quality which when falsely revered as a necessary constituent of art must blunt the reactions of those that have it to the infinity of new sources (each, possibly, in its impropriety, more unlikely than the last), whence beauty may suddenly emerge or be laboriously extracted; contemporary aspirations at least, not to speak of contemporary achievements, over-step, if they do not always transcend, the bounds that taste prescribes. That modern art is at its best in its least generally acceptable forms may be in some part accounted for by this ambitious disregard. It is clear, however, that the greatest paintings

do not exert their potent influences by being tasteful; a great work of art may be in 'perfect' taste, but, in so far as it is simply this, it is powerless either to exalt, disturb or, of course, to offend. Taste, in any art that seeks to act upon the spirit, can never be a first or an absolute consideration. To neglect its demands in pursuit of larger aims is merely to neglect a reliable precautionary measure—though one that deserves to be called a saving grace—against the danger of ridiculous failure to which attempts at sublimity are always exposed. That contemporary painting is exposed to just such a danger is a tribute to its ideals and a mark of the audacity with which these are followed; it is a danger which, notwithstanding the numbers of artists who succumb to it, is worth incurring for the sake of the rewards envisaged.

To recognize that taste is a totally imperceptible element in the most powerful works of art is not to deny—as if one should subscribe to the absurd notion of any precise scale of values in art—that it is a quality that can be cultivated or possessed to a pitch of exquisiteness, one of the refinements of which may provide the whole merit of a beautiful picture. It is to recognize simply that the ideal of perfect taste is a restrictive one, hampering the full expression of magnificence which may demand vulgarity, passion which may be uncouth, or strangeness—so often the vehicle of art—which is startling. Pictures that are above all the product of an innate or cultivated taste have a perceptible unity of form; their colour is noticeably harmonious, the more so perhaps for the introduction of some subtle discord serving to fix attention upon the melody of the whole; their relationship to nature derives less from vision than from fancy, even, possibly, from some faintly elaborate accent upon or variant from the most conventional type of fancy; the branches of trees are an arabesque, the air a unifying value contributing to the gracious coherence of the pattern, and the human figure no more than a note, even if it be the dominant note, in the general euphony; their technique fascinates the regard by the elegance of line, the softness or crispness of the brush stroke, the palatable consistency of the *matière*; palatable they must be before anything else and, as such, metaphorically speaking, they caress, rinse and refresh the eye. These are virtues which fully satisfy the connoisseur, and may also delight a sensibility that is nevertheless responsive to more profound or more spiritual appeals. They are the virtues of an art that

is no more than an ornament of life. The early landscapes of Monet and Pissarro are, for example, imbued with such subtle discretion and unpretentiousness; and we can say of artists as entirely different from one another as Chardin and Alexander Cozens that neither over-reach the inoffensive sensuousness of patterns and textures, or that the Greek limpidity, so soft and clear, of the early Corot represents an imposition of taste upon the landscape; to refined sensibilities, the works of much less illustrious painters make this appeal to the taste, arising here from a kind of fastidious modesty of intention such as constitutes the enchantment of Lepine and even attracts a charmed attention in the work of such muted luminaries as Mauve and Bosboom; while for everyone, the paintings of Whistler proclaim themselves as the flowers of, at its best, a most choice and delicate taste, cultivated, however, with a fierceness and obstinacy that sometimes impedes its expression.

Victor Pasmore is a Whistlerian painter. The effects he seeks to extract from appearances are symphonic, arrived at by arrangement, rejection and selection and often, unhesitatingly, by inventive alteration; his landscape subjects are quite independent of the natural motif, being composite memories arbitrarily modulated and adjusted in accordance with the painter's instinctive sense of formal propriety, the light and shadow in them, the varied alliances and cleavages of colour are not the terms of any vision of nature, but are an interplay of emphases composed with hardly more thought for the season and the hour than might be given by an inventor of designs for silks or porcelain. Similarly, the extreme vagueness of definition in all his work, the vaporous element in which what might be called his 'properties' subsist, is now, whatever may have been its origin, not the expression of a perceived effect, but confessedly an affectation, one which, when it is felicitous, may amount to an exquisite under-statement and must, in any event, be a useful aid to discretion and reserve in handling. The well-known picture *The Flower Barrow*, begun some years ago and still undergoing perfection, illustrates both the peculiar beauties and the risks of this apparently ingrained eccentricity of Pasmore's style. The degree of realization is here so atmospheric, that the whole scene melts into its main theme, the purchasers, the passers-by, even the street-lamps becoming so many fugitive blooms from the central bouquet; yet the picture is

not an unreadable abstraction, and the fact that it is immediately apparent in at least one case that the heads of the figures (with a single exception) are simply pink spheres and intended to remain so—neither almost flowers nor almost faces—must give some offence in a work that is otherwise a subdued, but mobile harmony created by a decorative imagination out of the data of some remembered reality and addressing itself to the faculty of taste to which unsought incongruity is anathema. The best of Pasmore's flower-pieces, landscapes, portraits, share this quality of *The Flower Barrow* of being more decorative and sensuous than interpretive. Though they are not, superficially or in their accessories, in the least oriental, contemplation of them might reveal that the painter is an admirer of Chinese art above that of all other cultures; it is the art that may be said to have produced objects and patterns most nearly to have been more than any other approaching the perfection of taste and the supreme concern of the connoisseur who also, perhaps, best appreciates the oriental strain in the early work of the Impressionists which is echoed in Pasmore's fastidious compositions.

Pasmore's painting, it is evident, has no affinities with the most influential currents of contemporary art which indicate an increasing absorption in private ecstasies and despairs as they may be reflected in the public distress of life or be imaged in symbols either imagined or re-cast from ancient mythologies. Yet he has been called the leader of a modern school and the names of others who have been associated with him or whose work bore some resemblance, either superficial or imitative, to his own, have been linked with his as representing a distinct tendency in English painting, one that might be set up, however hopelessly, as constituting some salutary counter-measure against the earnest, hopeful excesses of Surrealists, neo-Romantics or Constructivists. In Pasmore's view the 'Euston Road School' has, or had, no collective critical significance whatever; that, for a fleeting period culminating in the exhibition at Oxford in 1941, it promised to develop a theoretic cohesion, if not a policy, was due to the intellectual ardour of the late Graham Bell whose acute qualities of mind may have dulled in him any instinctive appreciation of the elegant sensuousness of his own artistic gift which was nearer to that of Pasmore than that of any other member of the group. His opinions on social questions may, for a moment, have distracted

Pasmore's development by suggesting a fruitful choice of subject from among the least interesting aspects, in streets, cafés and public-houses, of ordinary urban life, this was a choice to be made, moreover, for no such lightly poetic reasons as probably prompted Sickert to report the more picturesque aspects of the same scene, though Sickert's effects could not escape a degree of repetition either at the hands of Pasmore or of others who felt themselves touched by the subfusque canons appearing to emanate from the Euston Road. But the political moment passed, and the activity it had focused was mostly re-engulfed into the pervasive sloughs of English Impressionism, now, perhaps, gradually being drained, but which can still be seen to extend from Burlington House via the New English Art Club to the premises of Messrs. Wildenstein where a recent inroad was last month damping the sensibilities of visitors to their gallery.

The art of Pasmore also is open to what is at present the unflattering interpretation that he is a painter whose chief sanction is in the Impressionist tradition. He began as an Impressionist and his earliest work suggests an admiration of Steer's mature manner; subsequently, the dominating influence was Sickert's, and, as might be expected in any neophyte of Sickert, in some accompanying degree that of Bonnard and Vuillard. Pasmore's most recent paintings, however, four of which are reproduced here, provide unmistakable evidence of the direction that he himself acknowledges, which has been perceptible in much of his work of the more immediate past and conflicts with that of Impressionism (though it is a conflict in which the Impressionists themselves wrestled), in so far as it does not seek to fix truthfully and for ever the emotional force of some ephemeral natural effect, but to create from some starting-point in nature, by a process of blending, eliminating, re-grouping and re-colouring, a self-sufficient article, an article of the subtlest kind of luxury. Nor does it agree with that of Intimists like Sickert; Pasmore is not the painter of unnoted beauties glimmering in the darkness of lodging-houses or to be woven from the illumination of local music-halls; if it should be said of him that he should find the pretext of his inventions in any particular of nature, then the complexities of rime, the depths of pools, the waving of spring grasses and other such tenuous but vivid phenomena might be expected to secrete for him the

potentialities that would be most useful to his imagination.¹ 'Chiswick Reach' is a clear illustration of the artist's present mode of conception; the grove of naked trees is just as acceptable as simply a cascading rhythm of curls and spirals and the thin layer of winter haze, through which it is seen, is, as so much diaphanous texture, sensuous on its own terms, irrespective of the lyrical spectacle of winter in which it is involved, of a winter whence all sense of cold or privation seems naturally absent. It is in this picture also, with its judicious spacing and delicate linear structure, that the painter's usually implicit sympathy with the ideals of far eastern art is most frankly conveyed. 'The Quiet River' has the same, tamed, unquestioning charm; it is a refined arrangement in which nuances have been sensitively combined with definitions, in which cool, crystalline colours have been refreshingly joined and fused, the result having that kind of delectability that is one of the properties of, say, flowers, glass or textiles. This painting more than 'Chiswick Reach' shows signs, particularly in the contrast of the neat silhouette of the vehicle with the vague firmament of atmosphere which it relieves, of a material obligation to the unfinished masterpieces of Turner's old age, a debt that for Pasmore was worth making and may have helped to clear away the Sickertian fustian which dries up, where it does not roughen, the less successful of his earlier paintings. But, as with Whistler, whose landscape art has a surface affinity with Turner's, Pasmore's deliberate asides have nothing in common with Turner's oratory and his carefully circumscribed motives no resemblance to Turner's comprehensive half philosophical, half dramatic aspirations.

It is not to belittle Pasmore's achievements to state that, while they are firmly based upon historical example, upon a grasp of the decorative aspects of Impressionism, a reverence of the masterpieces of Chinese art and a natural acceptance of ends pursued by Whistler, they do not embody any awareness of current ambitions

¹It is to be regretted that such discerning private patrons as there are rarely go so far as to commission the specific subject of a picture as well as the picture itself; Pasmore might have been invited, for example, to paint larches in the early spring and the Warwickshire fields in summer; John Piper should be commissioned to draw a series of views of Scottish nineteenth-century castles; and it would doubtless be a powerful experience reacting to the effect upon Henry Moore's imagination of an order to illustrate the more monstrous loves of antiquity, those of Pasiphæa, Leda or Galatea.

and experiments or lead towards untrodden ways. There is no law that art must be prophetic; nor can there be any obligation upon artists to attune themselves to the spirit of the age since it is a spirit to whose creation they themselves contribute and whose character is changed or modified in accordance with their utterances. But it is curious that Pasmore should be able—and his ability cannot be denied—to linger in a deserted region, deserted, one would have thought because its resources were running out, and it must be questionable whether his art, always sensitive and sometimes exquisite, is not in danger of inanition in the absence of stimulus from any effective strand in the rent web of contemporary dreams, impulses or theories. We may, however, hope that, as its quality has hitherto only improved, the artist's personality will preserve the strength to save it from the risks of arid repetition and the perils of seclusion; it seems certain that no external stimulus will be forthcoming from those younger 'impressionist' painters with whom Pasmore has often been associated.

OSBERT SITWELL

THE TRUE STORY OF DICK WHITTINGTON

A TALE FOR CHILDREN

YOU may well inquire, child, the history and purpose of that enormous red-brick building over there; that is the famous *Whittington Central Cats' Aid Society and Sanatorium*. And, for once, I will consent to tell you its story, on condition that you do not interrupt and that if you fail to understand anything, either a word or sentiment, you will keep your questions until the end. I do it all the more readily because it is a tale that will help equip you for the world. In order, however, that you may derive the full benefit from the moral to be drawn, we must begin almost at the end, so that we may obtain thereby a glimpse of the glories that crowned Whittington's career, because it is essentially, in the delightful modern phrase, which you would do well to ponder, a

'success-story' indicating, how Perseverance and Industry are rewarded, and that we need never despair of Providence assisting us, if only, at the beginning of our lives, we learn to assist ourselves.

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It was a typical November, early November, day in the City of London. All the morning the crowds had surged in the streets, as they still called the narrow traffic lanes between the camouflaged hoardings that hid the broken façades of houses and the derelict brick-strewn areas. Here and there, a stout Norman tower survived, or an opalescent belfry by Wren pricked the grey sky as it had done for three centuries, while from it sounded the accustomed peals. The excited people jostled one another, and in places the crowd was so great that it broke through the hoardings and swarmed into the bomb craters, now, by the miracles of Science, as large as Greek theatres. Throughout the morning the weather had been fine, and not *really* cold, the onlookers had said as they thrashed their arms together and blew their noses. It only *seemed* cold, because this year the Show had taken so long a time to pass. But that was natural enough, too, and one must not grumble, for it had been designed to portray the Blessings of Peace.

As usual, the Bishops had blessed the tanks, that were wreathed with branches of olive, and in short sermons had pointed out that if men wanted peace, they must avoid being *peaceable*, must on the contrary, be prepared to fight everywhere, everyone, at once, and at the same time. Peace was not something negative, not just a period in which people were not making war: it should be a period of active preparation for the next war. Only thus could a true peace be attained; only thus should we make ourselves worthy of peace. . . . Then the procession started. First, on a mammoth car, came the miniature model of a bombed city—easy to make, but effective. (The onlookers cheered themselves hoarse.) Then followed bodies of flame-throwers in masks and armour, who drew behind them on a carrier a vast bomb, then bits of aircraft, lifted shoulder-high, then detachments of atom-splitters and electron-smashers in their uniforms of synthetic rubber, then platoons of freezers in their new, non-conductive suits, inflated like those of divers, then a car on which were placed what the crowd for the most part held to be dummies, copied

from the enemy dead—but some maintained that this would be too expensive, and that they were the real thing, preserved by a new secret process—and, finally, battalions of the new peace-keepers, as they are termed, wound up the whole parade, their faces painted with pigs' blood, while, for arms, they carried knives, bombs, grenades, pocket machine-guns, rays, and rubber truncheons. These last were the most popular item of all, and the crowd, especially the schoolboys in it, cheered till they could cheer no more. But everyone had enjoyed the Show. It had struck a new note, people agreed: you know, *modern, realistic*: none of the old papier-mâché stuff. Alas, as the Lord Mayor's coach, in which that dignitary, with fur-lined robe and cocked hat, and the Lady Mayoress could be seen rolling like porpoises, neared the spectators, a drizzle began and a little marred the pageantry.

The afternoon was wet, very wet, the rain pouring down the folds of thousands of waterproof coats, seeming to make of their shapes something noble, as if turning them to stone. Lamps glowed through the yellow darkness, and the reflecting surfaces of wet, broken stone, wet, broken tarmac, wet, broken cement, showed an infinity of watery lights. The faces of the newspaper boys, as they dashed along the pavements, were turned at that angle towards the sky, at which the faces of figure-heads are set, and were varnished with the rain.

'*Lord Mayor's Banquet, Sensation!*' they were crying. The eager purchasers obstructed the swift darting of their progress, bringing them to a halt, and pennies clinked quickly in scabbled hands. '*Sensation! Sudden illness of Lord Mayor!*'

In the Guildhall, under the lights, the tables had looked magnificent. The note of peace, which had pervaded and animated the Show, was carried right through the whole conception of the banquet, and great bunches of orchids, mauve and rose or spotted and stippled like snakes, were arranged in vases that were facsimiles of the most popular kinds of shell and bomb, but fashioned in gold plate. In the centre stood a golden skull, made into a loving cup; a replica of the cranium of the executed chief of the enemy nation. This beautiful piece of work was a gift from the Mayors of the principal cities of our Allies. The guests had spilled turtle soup down their red, voracious gullets; roast beef had followed, after soles: sorbets, quails, ices, grapes in jewelled bunches, sweets, all had gone down the same scarlet path. Now came the toasts and,

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best of all, the speeches. The Prime Minister of the day stood up, to couple the name of the Lord Mayor with Peace and Democracy.

‘The vast panorama of peace,’ he had begun, ‘which has been so ably, so ingeniously, translated for us into terms of pageantry today, is indeed an inspiring an—em—er—almost an intimidating prospect. Across the water, now, no enemy exists. World-famed empires have been thrust down beneath the mire of the centuries, and cities of a legendary renown and beauty have been erased, or, in the more amiable term of one of our great allies, liquidated. (Laughter.) This is an achievement of which all who shared in it may well be proud. And in it, no one has better played his part than the old, and I am glad to say, the new (cries of hear, hear!) Lord Mayor. You know him here, in this great City of London—I know him, as he was to us, in his private capacity during the hour of the nation’s need. He is a great killer! (Tremendous applause.) The complicated and wonderful killing machines, which his genius has shaped, and his indomitable energy produced, are second to none. Though it may be said—and it is high praise!—that in a world where every international effort has seemed doomed to failure, the great armament firms alone have set an example of successful co-operation, yet he has shown himself a patriot, first and foremost, willing to slaughter all who bar the nation’s progress. But you know him: you may well be proud of him; I need say no more, except that his example must inspire us.

‘The ideals of Europe, those ideals of Christianity, of brotherly love and chivalry, which raised the great cathedrals, have seldom been better exemplified than in the laying low of these edifices. Our ideals have won through, and we stand on the threshold of a new world. It is in many ways, in most ways, a far, far better world than the old; but it will not be—oh no!—an easy world. But I have never promised you easy things. In the old days, after we had fought, we lived by trade; but now the extermination of our chief customers has rendered us independent of them. Instead we must live by insuring each other’s washing, which we must increasingly take in. But, your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, my lords, ladies and gentlemen, what is the lesson—the lesson that we must learn and treasure in our hearts, if not in our heads, from henceforth? (Pause.) That we must be true to ourselves (outburst of stamping)—to ourselves, I was saying; that

we must steel our hearts, in the sacred cause of Equality and Free Speech to kill everyone who does not agree with us (prolonged cheering), so that another war may be unthinkable, and so that men, pacific at heart as the beasts of the field, the forest and the jungle, may enjoy in peace those blessings which they deserve. But we are not revengeful—oh no! Nor, as I can prove, are we selfish. For a war, out of which we gain no material advantage, must be as unselfish and praiseworthy as, judged by the standard of statesmanship, it is wise. The Little Man, now master, entered this war from no motive of the head, but of the heart. And feeling is a more noble process than thinking—and more democratic: for everyone can feel, but not everybody can think (Cheers). Otherwise I should not be addressing you here today, for there are sterner tasks to which I should attend. In the Peace before you, I offer you no period of slothful ease (cheers), no time for talk or reflection (stamping). It must be an epoch of endeavour, of strife (tremendous applause), of sweat (roars and cheering), of keeping your nose to the grindstone (tumultuous cheers, and waving of handkerchiefs): it must be'—And in this manner the great oration tottered inexorably to its appointed anticlimax.

Then, after it had ended, and after the storm of cheering had subsided, the toastmaster knocked again on the table with his gavel, and called out in a ceremonial voice, tinged by its accustomed burden of superiority:

'Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, my lords, ladies and gentlemen, pray silence for the Lord Mayor elect of the City of London, now entering on his third term of office: Sir Richard Whittington!!!'

The new Lord Mayor, his own successor, stood up, and with a singular ease of manner and appearance of spontaneity, began his speech. All that day he had felt ill, but no one would have known it: nor, himself, could he make out quite what was the matter, suffering, as he did, some uneasy stirring of the heart for which, perhaps, modern doctors have not yet found a name. As when a serious illness begins, so everything seemed strange, and the senses, each one, sight, taste, sound, hearing and touch seemed to translate the messages they received differently from their wont—especially, hearing. Even the pealing of the chimes of bells now ringing to announce his third span, carried for him an echo difficult to seize, some refrain of words heard long ago. At

times he almost caught their drift. '*Turn Again,*' he thought he could distinguish—but it must have been very long ago. Meanwhile, he was making his speech, and so could not give full attention to the other matter. And he was speaking well. . . . '*Turn Again!*' . . .

People liked to hear what he was saying, and Lady Whittington, from the far end of the table, was watching him intently. Dressed in black velvet, it was the emerald ring she wore on her finger that first drew one's attention—and no wonder, for it was the Whittington Emerald, as it is known, one of the largest, and of the most pure and vivid quality in the world. (It had been acquired for Sir Richard many years before in Tongador.) But, in any case, with her white hair, and her skin, like white kid, she was a handsome woman, especially at first sight. It was as though she had been specially created to glow with a white radiance at public functions, the whiteness being there to show off the jewels, as the hoar-frost on a Christmas tree is designed to set off the toys and tinsel. But then, having just accepted this conclusion, one realized that, after all, the rime was genuine, thrown off by the inner core, rather than the deposit of the years. For so tall, imposing a person, she was well finished, except for her hands, which looked like a sketch for hands, curiously lumpy, too, so that when she took off her long, fawn-coloured gloves it was as though she were peeling potatoes. With her large eyes, earth-brown, she continued to scan her husband's face, and in them shone a certain anxiety; no doubt she knew that he had been feeling ill.

He spoke admirably; a full ten minutes passed before he came to his chief theme, the gratitude that the nation, the Empire, the world, and those of the conquered even more than of the conquering powers, owed to the man who had just spoken. '*Gratitude,*' he was saying, 'is perhaps the first, the most typical and important of human qualities, and it is one that the Little Man possesses in the lowest—I use "lowest" in its new democratic sense, meaning "highest" (a word that itself reeks of the prejudices of the bad old days), in the lowest degree. The good faith of the crowd—and what is the crowd, but a herd?—I mean, an august assemblage—of Little Men, has long been proverbial as that of princes. But gratitude must not only be felt, it must be expressed, expressed for a lifetime. And how can this quality, this gratitude, best be expressed?' . . . Here Sir Richard fell silent, to mark the end

of one of the periods of his speech, no less than to allow a time for the burst of applause which this sonorous display of sentiment naturally promoted, partly to spend itself. As it began to die, he lifted up a hand in the style of the great orators to quell it. A profound silence of anticipation interposed, in which sounded a faint, sad mewling. Lady Whittington heard it, and looked over her shoulder. Her husband meanwhile was proceeding with his speech. 'Gratitude,' he was saying, 'gratitude—' but at this moment a gaunt, hungry-looking, rather mangy black cat, with wild and haunted eyes, jumped on to the table, and turned its whiskered, grizzled face towards him.

The cat stole the limelight. On it the gaze of every guest was fixed, as it stalked towards the Lord Mayor, so delicately threading its way among the orchids and gold plate. It was not, perhaps, really so unusual a cat, nor so old in its aspect as one might have presumed. It was not so much unlike the ordinary run—if one may use the word in that connection—of cats; it even resembled many cats that can be seen flickering in figures-of-eight through railings, or leaping vertically, with the dynamism of ecstasy, up tree-trunks, or up high walls to the beloved rooftops, their dominion of the night. Nevertheless, when you looked, the cat *was* old, ancient more than old. . . . Now it had come so near the Lord Mayor, that it rubbed its neck against his hand. 'Gratitude,' he stammered with pale lips, 'Gratitude' . . . and then, with a moan, fell back. The cat, seeming much concerned, jumped with grace and agility—considering its age—on to the floor, and nestled against him. The mewling turned to a loud contented purr. . . . Along the tables, there was an uneasy stirring of hands and moving of eyes, and a few guests, with less restraint than their fellows, murmured 'So it *is* true. The man's haunted by a cat!' . . . The Lord Mayor was carried out into the air, Lady Whittington followed him, and the guests dispersed.

For several days, he was confined to his bed, and could see no one. But since the incident had aroused public interest, Lady Whittington allowed herself to be interviewed by members of the Press. She began, with considerable charm, to explain that Sir Richard was, and always had been—*always* was the word upon which she lingered—particularly devoted to animals, though she must confess that he preferred dogs to cats. His Sealyham, 'Tufts', was his constant companion, and she had often heard Sir

Richard say that he did not know how he would have got through the war without the doggies. But, though he favoured dogs, he had done more for cats than any man living. He had founded first *The Whittington Central Cats' Aid Society and Sanatorium*; a place to which old cats could retire in comfort, where they could be well looked after, watched and tended, not allowed to stray, and where they could be sure, too, of their saucer of milk at regular intervals. But though this rest-house served, and continued to serve, a useful purpose, it was situated in too noisy and central a district to obtain the best results. It was very tempting for cats. So Sir Richard had then planned and endowed *The Cats' Charterhouse*, in the grounds of Whittington, the family seat in Gloucestershire, and finally, since that, too, failed fully to meet the need, he had inaugurated *The Cats' Provident Society Almshouse* in the Outer Hebrides.

All this work, into which had gone so much forethought and imagination, he had achieved for cats, though, in this resembling many gallant and eminent men before him—Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener for example—he was, as ordinary people termed it, *afraid* of cats; this apparent fear of them, however, was not a phobia, but to be attributed to what was now a recognized illness, termed by doctors 'Cat-asthma'. He was, in fact, allergic to cats as certain other men are to hay-seed or some kinds of scented soap. And the war had aggravated his sufferings in this respect. It had taken toll of him. Even if the Prime Minister himself at the Guildhall Banquet had not borne such eloquent testimony to the patriotism of her husband, the citizens, the Corporation and the Sheriffs had done so in practical fashion by their insistence on his retaining for a third span the office of Lord Mayor of London.

At this point a particularly impudent journalist had interrupted with the question:

'All the same, m'lady, wouldn't it be the truth to state that Sir Richard owed his fortune in the first place to a cat?'

Lady Whittington did not allow herself to be disturbed or distressed by the singular lack of feeling shown by this man. She replied in a steady and decisive voice:

'My husband owes his position to his talents, his application, and his unremitting zeal for the Public Weal.'

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The origin of Dick Whittington was, and still is, a little

obscure. Some aver that he came from Whittington in Gloucestershire, but I hold that he only settled there when he had made his fortune, and that he hailed originally—and all the neighbourhood agrees with me—from Whittington in Derbyshire. It is a comfortable enough little place now. Trams clank down the road between lines of red council-houses, each with, in the window, for show, an identical china ornament, the realization of some strange ideal or perhaps, as at Pompeii, an offering to the God of Plenty; either a slouching boy, dun-coloured, with hands in his pockets, or a curtsying, winsome, small girl, in a half crinoline, of which she holds up the ends in thick hands. Feudalism here has plainly been put a stop to, for the squire's house is a lunatic asylum, and laughter—or, if not laughter, a howling very like it—sounds continually over the well-kept lawns from where the lunatics play happily their innocent games of 'Smash the Sane Man' and 'Hunt the Warder' under the starred, syringa bushes and the fat-leaved, toad-speckled laurels. The Rectory is to become a Youth Hostel, or even a Civic Centre, and loud-speakers will be erected for teaching compulsory crooning at every street corner . . . But I forgot my trade, Dick Whittington, I was about to say when this vision of a municipal paradise I have just described impinged upon my mind and cut across my story, was a foundling, being discovered one winter's night on the Moor, outside the village, then still a rustic, backward place. He was adopted by a blacksmith and his wife, who brought him up as if he were their own son, providing him with a comfortable home, warm both in hearth and heart. The winter he enjoyed especially, for in the long dark afternoons, he was allowed to sit at the back of the smithy, which resembled a cave, listening to the rhythmic clanging of hammer on anvil and watching the sparks trace their comet-like path across the rectangle of dark blue sky through the doorway. All his life, he remembered this, the smell of hot iron and singed hoof, and the hammering and stamping of horses.

He was only twelve years old, however, when a great plague swept the country, carrying off the smith and his wife, so that Dick found himself back where he had started in the bleak and misty darkness of Whittington Moor, a broken, wintry wood that lay south of the village, towards the big town of Chesterfield. At night the wind roared through the scrubby young beach and sycamore, and whistled through the chinks of the low, loosely

built walls of dun stone. With darkness, the boy would fall asleep, but the cold wind would soon wake him, and he would lie on his coat, spread on the ground, watching the flames of Staveley Furnace, that moved like the tongues of lions, or a few sparks that flew up from the pyramid of cinders making a pattern against the sky. And this would cause him to think again of his father, rhythmically hammering, the sparks flying up from the anvil, until as he lay there, he seemed almost to hear that double sound, both sharp and bell-like. . . . There was no one to look after him, and no one for him to look after—except a small black kitten; which together with a few things placed in a bandanna handkerchief, made into a bundle and tied to his stick, formed his entire possessions. It was not easy to feed the kitten, for she would not eat berries, but he had not been able to find it in his heart to leave her behind, for she was one of the litter of the old black cat in the forge, and was all that he had now to remind him of his home. Besides, the little creature from her earliest days had adopted him.

He had started to leave without her, and on each occasion, as he had reached the outskirts of the village, he had heard a mewing, and looked round—and there she was! Twice he had gone back with her to the forge, black and deserted, so utterly dead with its strange lack of fire and clangour. But the third time he found her, he had let her be.

The kitten was very young then, a playful little beast, resembling, when at rest, a black woollen ball; but she was usually in movement. A touch of Persian in her ancestry gave her long, more silky hair than the usual cat, and her front paws were white, and very subtle. Already, too, she was accomplished and could leap vertically in the air, to a height amazing for her size. In the daytime Dick, seated on a fallen tree trunk, would spend hours in swinging his bundle, tied to the stick, backwards and forwards, so that the kitten could jump at it, or knock it with a white paw, after watching it as if it were alive. She was so active and pretty, indeed, that strangers passing over the Moor would stop to stroke the little creature, and even dog-lovers would say—and the remark was intended as a compliment—‘She’s more like a dog than a cat!’ . . . But the truth was that no kitten could be more like a kitten.

Dogs, much more plainly than cats, have names attached to their personalities; because dogs are active, aggressive, belong to

the business world, and move much in military circles. (Almost every officer, young or old, is followed—or led—by a dog; but few are followed by cats.) So for the most part, they bear the names of generals, though seldom of admirals or air-marshals—and, of course, of the better kind of financier. (Down, Melchett! Down, Joel!) Often too, they are styled after politicians—(Down, Attlee, down, Anthony—posterity is free to vary and modernize these labels) or bear imaginative onomatopoeic names, that might, when uttered loudly be the sound of their own barking; Spot! Smut! Shot! Splash! Dash! Dingle! But Dick found it difficult to know what to call the kitten, until one day, a passing traveller, seeing her playing, asked him her name. Hearing that the lad had found none for her, he remarked: ‘You ought to christen her *Roxana*: it’s a Persian name’. Liking its outlandish sound, Dick adopted the stranger’s suggestion, shortening the word to *Roxy*.

One morning, in the pheasant-feathered tail of autumn; before the first snow had fallen, a crisp Derbyshire morning of cobwebs and mists and scented, golden bracken, and of red berries which—for there had been a gale—covered the path through the wood and scrunched underfoot, Dick and his kitten were setting out for London to seek their fortune. He felt sad at leaving, but the kitten stopped from time to time, to play with a red berry on the green moss, knocking it backwards and forwards, and as Dick did not wish to waste time, he put Roxy in the pocket of his coat, with just her head showing out of it, and gradually her mewing and purring comforted him, until, whistling a popular tune of the day, *Three Sailor Lads*, he began to stride along in the direction of Chesterfield, confidently, almost cheerfully.

Already he could see the crooked, crumpled spire of the church there, round which, it was said, the devil had wound his tail, cork-screwing its shape in front of him: but now he began to feel hungry and called at a tall farmhouse, that seemed so isolated in its own world of the early morning, with its sounds of lowing and braying and cackling and clucking, as to be an hallucination that by midday would vanish with the fading mists; but it proved substantial enough, and there he obtained a drink of milk for himself and his kitten. The farmer’s wife told him, at the same time, to come to the kitchen fire and warm himself. Sitting by the fire was a carter who asked the boy what business he was on, and hearing his story, and that he was bent on going to London,

where even the paving-stones, the lad had been told, were made of gold, said that he would give him a lift there. For three days they drove southward, and then, one morning, just as the winter's sun was topping the dome of St. Paul's, the good-natured carter put him down, before continuing on his way to Canterbury. Sure enough, Dick saw the gold lying in heaps and strips on the pavement; but it could not be picked up. It was a singular morning, full of the tongues of bells, which were to play so important a part in his life, as well as of this delusive golden light.

It was not long, alas! before Dick discovered how little gold was to be found—and even how little paving, except in the churchyards, where he slept of a night, above the bones of generations. The city *must* be very rich, he supposed, but there was little sign of it in the exteriors of the houses, and he never saw the inside of them, though a policeman had promised him he would see the inside of a prison. For the most part, people were so busy that when he tried to stop them to tell them his story, they merely hurried on. The carter, when he left, had given him a loaf, but that was three days ago, and for a whole day he had had nothing to eat, nor had poor Roxy, and no one had spoken to him, except the policeman of whom I've just told you, and an officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who had come up to him, and had said that the kitten looked half-starved, and that if the boy was not careful, he would be prosecuted. Hearing this, Dick ran off as fast as weak legs would take him. . . . That night in the churchyard, Roxy howled for the first time—hitherto, she had only mewed and purred—and this had given him an idea. The next day, he sang in the street, holding his hat in front of him. . . . Fortunately, he sang very badly, and had a loud voice, so people listened and liked his singing, as always in London streets, and gave him money—and advice. 'Don't get your voice trained, whatever you do,' they advised him, 'or you'll spoil its freshness.' Even now, however, he barely earned enough to keep himself and Roxy.

One morning, Dick was singing outside a grand house in a square, when a large old gentleman, standing in a bow-window, heard him. The old gentleman remained there for a minute or two, puffing like a whale, in the way that large old gentlemen are apt to puff when they stand in bow-windows. Then he turned away, and in a moment or two had opened the door and had

arrived in the open air, under the portico. From there, with a manner suggesting that he thought he could not be seen, he examined the boy, very slowly, very carefully, and when his eyes had reached as far as the kitten's black face, peering out of the pocket of the ill-fitting jacket, and her two white paws hanging over it from their joints, he began to walk ponderously down the steps. Dick went on singing. It was a rather dismal sound, he realized, but the feel of the cold, hard pavers of the churchyard was still in his young bones, nor had he been able to afford breakfast.

The old gentleman, advancing towards him, had said:

'The police'll be after you, m'lad, if you go on like that. Stop that horrible noise, can't you?'

'Please sir, I can't stop it,' Dick replied. 'I'm doing it for my living.'

'Well, tell me your story instead.'

This Dick proceeded to do, and having heard it, the old gentleman pronounced: 'You shall have work in my house'.

'But I can't be separated from my cat,' Dick cried, pointing to his kitten.

'Certainly not,' the old gentleman agreed, 'you can't leave her. Besides, she'll probably make a fine mouser. She has the look of one to me—and there's always room in the world for a mouser.'

Then the old gentleman took Dick into the hall, rang the bell, and when the butler answered it, said 'Grinder! take this lad downstairs, and tell Mrs. Grinder that first, before anything else, she's to give him, and his kitten, some breakfast. . . . I'll see her later.'

Dick had noticed how different the old gentleman's clothes were, from any that he had hitherto seen: for everything he wore appeared to be of the finest material, though most sober and plainly cut. And now it turned out that he was a famous merchant. He owned a fleet of ships, and traded with Russia for furs, for drugs of Tartary, and the white furs of the Arctic Circle—where, on occasion, his ships took so great risks for him, in going to the farthest extremity of the ocean, that they are still there, fast in the ice—with India for spices and pepper, with Arabia for perfumes, with Egypt for henna, with the rest of Africa for diamonds and emeralds, and with the races of the distant isles, who grow horse-hair on their heads, for pearls; to all these places he sent in return

English wool or English cloth. Mr. Fitzwarren—for that was the old gentleman's name—was a widower, with one daughter, Pamela, a lovely girl of ten, but rather large for her age; indeed she was already taller than Dick by an inch or two. She had fair hair, of a darker colour than usual, brown eyes, and a thick, smooth, fair skin: but an unusual elegance attended her. She was very proud, though, and not as kind as her father, and thought it beneath her dignity even to look at Dick.

The task allotted to him was to wait on Mrs. Grinder, and since he was in her company all day in the kitchen, or within reach in the scullery, she had plenty of opportunity for finding fault with him. Indeed he was glad when night came, and he could go to bed; for he had been given a garret to himself, right at the top of the house. This bare little room had one window, opening on to the roof, and so, very convenient for Roxy. In the morning, he would have to get up at five to clear the stoke-hole and light the fires for boiler and kitchen. Mrs. Grinder would not come down till eight o'clock, and from that time on, she would always find the opportunity to give Dick a harsh word or allot him an unpleasant task. For example, she would often order him to peel the onions, so that his eyes should water. Then she would laugh at him and roar out 'Cry-baby!' She was for ever telling him that she would poison his cat, if the animal entered the kitchen (which she did constantly to look for Dick). And it appeared almost as if Roxy provoked Mrs. Grinder purposely, for the manner in which the cat, as she grew older, caught mice almost in defiance of Mrs. Grinder, who maintained that she herself was so clean and economical a cook that there could be none in the house, must have infuriated her. And Roxy, as if to emphasize their numbers, commonly carried the scalps of the mice to her master, laying them out in a row on the kitchen floor, so that they could be counted by anyone who walked through, and there could be no gainsaying them. The cat brought them to Dick, either as a sign of her own prowess, or as a gift; but Mrs. Grinder thought it an act of mere spite, and pretended to think that the cat caught them in neighbouring houses. She proceeded, therefore, to take it out of Dick in a variety of ways. Herself, she talked Cockney and therefore liked to make fun of the boy's way of talking, for he 'spoke broad', as the phrase goes in Derbyshire. He used 'Tha' and 'Thee', and said

'yoursen' for 'yourselves', and indulged in many uncouth and rustic expressions. In her acrid voice, Mrs. Grinder would mimic him, for she liked to humiliate him in front of people, especially in front of Miss Pamela, since she loved the little girl as much as she hated Dick and Roxy. He used to hide sometimes, so as to see the child pass, and Mrs. Grinder, noticing this, would pretend not to be aware of it, and then, as Miss Pamela went by, would haul him out of his refuge, thereby making him look silly. Or if the little girl chanced to stop for a moment to play with Roxy—to whom she paid more attention than to Dick, for cats are all of one class—Mrs. Grinder would call her to order, saying, 'Naow, Miss Pamela, that dirty little animal belongs to that dirty little boy, and isn't for the likes of yaou to play with!'

Mrs. Grinder's friends alleged that she possessed a kind heart, and indeed it may be so, but a kind tongue would have been more to the purpose. Unfortunately, she prided herself on 'always speaking out, to people's faces'. With her, however, it took three, not two, to make a quarrel, for, besides the person whom she assaulted, she had to have another in whom she could confide her injuries and triumphs. Thus, when Mrs. Grinder was having one of her perpetual rows with other people, she would temporarily become more amiable to Dick; but he hated her grumbling about others, almost more than her direct abuse of himself.

She would stand at the kitchen-table, chopping, usually; during these moods, her figure looking like an old-fashioned cottage loaf, her face fashioned, it seemed, of one of the raw meats with which she was always dealing. 'I knaow I've got a temper,' she would say to him, 'not one of those slaow tempers. Grinder mi' be thankful, but you knaow, easy to raouse, easy to gaow as they si'—but one thing I can't abide, and that's to let things gaon, and not speak aout. I can't bear false fices, or people 'oo si' one thing to your fice and another be'ind your back. I must 'ave it aout. Neither Grinder nor me are ones to let things lie on us; oh, naow, not us. So I said to Grinder, "you gaow and fetch'er, and I'll tell her strite, I will to'er fice". "I shouldn't", Grinder said, "I shouldn't, Mother; you'll only upset yourself." "I'm not a coward, Grinder," I said, "a runner; I can look arter myself if it comes to that!" So 'e brought'er . . . I didn't si' much, you knaow, I didn't let myself gaow; I jus' said "Hemmer,

yer mean, sneaky little aound, was it yaou, that told Mrs. Norbury as I said Mrs. Craowker was'n better than she should be; was it yaou, yaou dirty cringer, yaou, speaking one thing to the fice, and another be'ind the back? Was it yaou? Aout with it," I says, like that, "Aout with it, for I like things strite and above board. If I 'ave a thing agen a person, then I si' it—but si' it about 'em, that's a thing I'd never do. Never. Neither me nor Mr. Grinder, and if Mrs. Croawker is naow better than she should be, what 'as that to do with me?" I ses; "That" she ses, very stuck up and nasty, "is what I ask myself, Mrs. Grinder." "O you 'orrible little beast" I ses, as quick as anything, "you mean 'ownd, so it *was* yaou! I'd be ashimed to be your mother, I would, Hemmer..." So the denunciation, the repining, would continue, sometimes for hour after hour.

At last, driven equally beyond endurance by her bad treatment of him and her nagging confidences, he determined to run away. Yet he hesitated and procrastinated because Mr. Fitzwarren had been so kind to him, and he feared it might seem ungrateful, and, in addition, a single amiable glance from Miss Pamela would make him alter his mind. At last, however, one morning after breakfast, he overheard Mrs. Grinder—who was chopping up a chicken at the time, and did not realize that he was standing in the doorway—confide in a loud voice to one of the kitchen-maids, 'I taold the Master that Dick might mike a cabin boy on one of his ships, but 'e'll never mike a footman or even a pantry boy, so the Master's only keeping 'im in the 'ouse till the winter's over, because it's difficult to find another boy naow, and then 'e's sending 'im to Japan.'

When Dick heard these words, they decided him—since he had no means of telling that they were not true—and he crept out of the house, stopping neither to pack his bundle, nor even to take his stick. He ran as fast as he could, not troubling to look where he was going (what did it matter?): but after about forty minutes he became tired and pulled up. Besides, the morning was beautiful—for that, though few people realized it, was what it was—so beautiful that he stood still and, as he did so, had the sense of something tremendously important about to happen to him... It was eleven o'clock on a February morning, and the winter crispness, just touched with spring, lingered in the air, while the sun was again spreading its miser's gold along

the pavement. And though coal, which gives its dark substance to the native mists of London and turns them into fogs, was burning in many thousands of open grates, yet, in the air there was only a vaporous opalescence that wrapped itself like a fleece round the sun and, seemingly, a fragrance of wood-smoke, as though it had been blown into the great city from many hamlets on the edge of forests.

In the deserted, paved space where Dick now found himself, there was no one passing, no one hurrying. It was a neglected corner, full of the feeling of other days. Nothing stirred... A hush prevailed, as if sound were dead and with it the power of hearing: albeit this loss appeared to strengthen other senses. He tried, under these influences, to sum up for himself what he felt, and why he had this so urgent intimation, derived from the very air, of something momentous for him: but all that he could decide was that he felt lonely... And just then, he heard a loud contented purring, and looking down, saw Roxy scampering upon velvet paws in the minute playground she had made for herself round his boots, for one of the laces had come undone and trailed on the pavement, and she was knocking the tag, and jumping after it, and performing a thousand pretty feats of simulation, so as to preserve in her animal mind the fiction that it, too, was a living thing.

Dick had forgotten the very existence of his cat, but now he took her up and stroked her, and, as he did so, a thing occurred which he was never to forget. As if he were watching a bud break into a perfection of flower, of which it was impossible even to dream, all the bells in the innumerable steeples of London began to ring: bells old and bells new, hoarse bells and bells that were shrill, bells loud-mouthed and bells soft-singing, cracked bells and whole bells, bells that talked of material affairs, and bells that sang of ideals lost or realized, bells that wheezed and bells that whispered, tolling bells and pealing bells, bells that spoke with the voice of angels, and bells that sang from depths to a darker vision. The air itself seemed to be of the substance of their vibration. In after years, he wondered whether it really could have happened, and what it could have portended, what it signified: for, indeed, there were no victories to celebrate except those always current in a great city, the victory of greed over kindness, age over youth, Dives over Lazarus, the healthy

over the sick. But why should bells ring for such ordinary triumphs of the town... Still, they *had* rung.

They rang for a full ten minutes, carillons of frost and sun, songs that with the greatest virtuosity sang an idiot tune. Then, suddenly, they changed in an instant, and just as, when you are in a railway carriage, the train can fit its rhythm to anything, sing in your ear any words or composition it chooses, from a Beethoven symphony to a song such as 'I do like to be beside the seaside', so all at once the bells sang in unison these words:

'Turn again, Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London!
Turn again, Whittington,
You must be bold.
Turn again, Turn again!
Learn again, Learn again!
Then London will bring you
Your streets paved with gold.'

On hearing this message, so strangely delivered, Dick returned to Mr. Fitzwarren's house, and when his master sent for him, and inquired why he had run away, the boy told him the truth, saying how cruelly he had been treated in the kitchen. In consequence, Mr. Fitzwarren spoke severely to Mrs. Grinder, and she never thereafter held him up to ridicule, or gave him cause for complaint.

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When Dick was fifteen or sixteen, Mr. Fitzwarren, who always liked to share his good fortune with those working for him, called together the members of his household, to inform them that a ship of his was sailing in a few days for a distant country, and that reason and experience led him to believe that this enterprise would be especially rewarding in its results. If, therefore, any of his servants cared to put money into the venture, or, if their savings were insufficient, to confide to the hands of the ship's Captain, objects that he could sell on their behalf at great profit to the natives, they were free to do so. All the servants gave him their thanks for his kindness, and until the vessel started, talked of little else but this coming gamble. Even Mrs. Grinder abandoned her usual subjects of conversation, in order to talk of it, though in different vein from the rest.

'It's just a trick,' she said, as she larded a bit of meat. 'It's just a trick of the Master's,' she repeated in a voice loud enough to stand out against a background of sizzling, 'a wi of getting our sivings, as 'e can't get 'em any other wi, so as to keep us servants. It's because 'e knows in 'is 'eart that one man's as good as another.'

Mrs. Grinder, however, did not really herself believe what she said, and was as excited as the rest. A pleased air of expectancy obtained. The most thrifty of the household brought money to Mr. Fitzwarren to invest in the enterprise, but the rest of them brought their most precious possessions: for example, housemaids and kitchenmaids brought such things as a filagree box, sent from India by a sailor-cousin, a pincushion in puce velvet with *Dinna Ken*, or some Scottish motto of that sort, inscribed on it in false seed pearls, a turquoise brooch consisting of a spider's bulbous body caught in its own web of golden threads—or were they legs?—a matchbox of Dutch silver, with a pattern on the top that human eye could never unravel, a china figure, of mat surface, but eruptive, that represented an idealization of 1880 charm, all flounces, smiles and frills, an alarum clock, of some grievous white metal, through which showed a yellow core, its bells worn at the jaunty angle to which the years had knocked it, a china box with a fox terrier painted on it, the poor little creature's head very much on one side, as though a stroke had interposed, giving to a mood of intense and foolish inquisitiveness a temporary permanence, a silver photograph frame embossed with a design of tulips, and a cushion, black silk one side, and white on the other, with painted on it in water-colour, a vivid, realistic design of red poppies. Everyone brought something, money or personal chattels, all except Dick. Alone of the whole household, he had no savings and no belongings with which he could part. Thus, while the others were talking cheerfully of what the vessel would bring them on the return voyage, Dick, dispirited and humiliated, would sit in his garret, with his cat for sole company.

His idea came to him only just in time. One afternoon, as the household gathered on the steps to give a send-off to the Captain, who had been having luncheon with his employer, and was now starting to go down to the docks, Dick, who was at the back, broke through the little knot of people, with Roxy asleep in his arms, and cried to Mr. Fitzwarren :

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'I have nothing of my own, Sir, nothing to sell, except this cat. She is all I have to make my fortune. Please take her, Sir, and ask the Captain to sell her for me.'

At this the cat—she was now full grown, though of slight stature—struggled to escape; but her master handed her over to Mr. Fitzwarren, and he passed her on to the Captain. She now remained still and quiet, but, sitting up in the Captain's arms, gazed at Dick, while two large tears, that glittered like diamonds (but they were *not* diamonds or Roxy would have been retained at home), formed in her eyes. It was, indeed, an affecting scene, and much impressed all those who were there, even Mrs. Grinder. Miss Pamela cried, and her father warmly congratulated the boy on his spirit of enterprise, and above all, of self-sacrifice. And a Mr. MacMagnus, a close friend of Mr. Fitzwarren's, and a master of industry, who had also been present at the luncheon, exclaimed, so that everyone could hear it, 'That young man will go far'. Since Mr. MacMagnus possessed a reputation for spotting coming men, these words produced all the more effect.

The Captain, still clasping Roxy in his arms, climbed into the waiting cab, and as it drove away, the master of the house, Miss Pamela, Mr. MacMagnus and the cluster of servants, waved their hands and cheered. Roxy still made no effort to escape, but even above the rattling of the wheels and the cheering, could be heard her sobbing. But it did not reach Dick, for in his head rang bells that sang:

'Turn again, Turn again!'

'Learn again, Learn again!'

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Time began to move more quickly, for Dick was growing up. He was much more popular in the house now. For one thing, it was generally felt that his giving the cat away like that showed there was something to him, and proved that he possessed both character and acumen. And, in itself, the absence of the cat made life easier for him. Mrs. Grinder, for example, no longer bore him a grudge, had even come to like him. And everyone in the house seemed now to value his society because of his cheerfulness, for the truth was that in the two years that had elapsed since Mr. Fitzwarren had last heard of his ship, the whole household had grown depressed: for them, so much was at stake.

At last a message reached Mr. Fitzwarren that the vessel was still lying loaded in the harbour of Nebaka-Koko, the chief port of Tongador, and, worse, that a great plague was sweeping over the country. Many began to fear that the Captain and his crew were dead, and that, in consequence, they would lose or had lost, all they possessed—but Dick had only lost his cat, if that were so, and he thought little about the matter.

It must have been two or three years after the ship had left England, when Dick had almost reached manhood, that one night—he still slept in the garret—he woke up with a start. A full moon shone through the open window, showing a world of roofs. He thought the cold must have woken him, for it was a very frosty night, but then, he heard a mewling, and with a tremendous bound, a black cat leapt lithely across the sill and landed on his bed . . . Well, it was odd, though there was nothing particularly surprising in it, he supposed—but as the animal raised her body, the moon caught it, and he saw that this particular cat fairly blazed with jewels; which *was* a little surprising. At first Dick thought he must be dreaming. The cat stood, arching its back, in a flood of light from the moon. A small dog-collar of enormous brilliants surrounded its throat, though the long, silky Persian hair a little obscured their scintillation. What appeared to be a single, huge emerald sparkled from the left ear, being inset there after the Hindu fashion, and round the right fore-paw glittered an anklet of rubies. But this could be no dream, for the cat came straight to Dick, and, as he sat up in bed, jumped on his shoulder, and rubbed its head against his neck.

It *was* Roxy, there could be no doubt about it. She purred loudly, and after a few minutes, climbed down from Dick's shoulder on to the bed, and sat there, looking at him, and scratching at her neck with a paw, as if she wanted something. After a while Dick understood: she wanted him to undo the clasp for her and take the necklace off. That done, the cat stretched itself beside him, and slept.

The next day, the Captain, who proved to have survived all the dangers of the voyage, came to luncheon, and afterwards sent for Dick, to tell him of his good fortune, and how it had happened.

When the ship had arrived at Nebaka-Koko, the great white plague was at its height. The negroes called it *The White Death*. Everything was deserted; every being, every living

thing in some of the vast, teeming cities, seemed to be dead. As the ship drew into the harbour, into the atmosphere of the shore, where the torrid African heat danced in a sultry confusion above beach and houses and grounds, the crew had been amazed to see no bathers, no boatmen, no loungers, no longshoremen even—only an army of skeletons that balefully glittered. The fever and heat had driven whole crowds down to the sea, to try and cool their simmering blood. Some had died as they entered the water, others, where they stood or reclined, under the vultures, watching how they might descend to enforce equality, to prove that the black races, too, possessed the whitest of skeletons. So this great multitude of the dead reclined among the enormous shells, thick-lipped shapes in nacre that are to be found on tropical shores, or stood out against a background of gardens, of trellised arbours and arches in the Moorish manner, and colonnades round which twined the serpentine branches of the unfamiliar plants of the country, now expanding their huge orange and purple cups. The few black faces that remained from the plague, seemed to have a green shutter of fear over them; their eyes peeped out from the arches, rolling, as if in search of comfort. Even the whites of the eyes now had this green light in them.

Nor had it been any better in Ta-Balu, the capital, the great city. Few of the inhabitants dared to move out of their houses, though the gaily-coloured streets of mud, and the chattering market-places were silent, shuddering in the white blaze of noon. Here and there a venomous serpent, escaped from the snake-charmers who had fallen dead in the chief piazza during the climax of their most ingenious tricks, hissed from a gutter, and the lions, now free of keepers, could be seen shaking their manes and trotting back with heraldic gait to their homes in the Central Forest.

Even now, though so many had already perished, the plague had increased in virulence. Day by day, those still living fell dead, as they walked, were carried in litters, or drove; at the sides of the roads, in the ditches, the corpses lay, piled up, where they had tumbled as they contracted the sickness. And then it approached the precincts of *Mon Repos*, the Mountain Palace, where the Emperor, crowned and wearing his robes of State, and clasping the two-edged Sword of Justice in his hand, sat trembling in the innermost court. The corridors and galleries, with their vast arches open to snare the winds,

though usually full of courtiers and officials, were now empty: those who remained alive no longer wished to walk there, to catch the tainted air. Besides superstition held—and science supported it—that the plague was borne by rats, and His Majesty had himself heard the sound of them, that increased noticeably from day to day in the galleries as he walked. And sometimes, when the Emperor felt so fearful of the creatures that he climbed to the top of the great tower, where, surely, he would be secure from them, even there, as he looked down on the vast and glistening expanse of the African champaign, with its groves of orange that held under their leaves a perpetual night, dark and balmy, that was lit only by their fruit, with its hedges of pomegranate and its fields of mangoes and melons and paw-paws, he would see the furrows filled with an advancing army of horrid black shapes, all, it seemed to him, hurrying towards the palace. What could he do?

First he sent for the witch of the white people, the Rodent Officer of the Agricultural Control Board, lately inaugurated, through Geneva, by the white powers. She was a fat American woman, who wore a green Rodent Officer's coat, and blue serge trousers, inappropriate to her structure. She had a lighted cigarette stub, clipped to her upper lip all the time she worked or talked. Having surveyed *Mon Repos* and its grounds, she put down two powders, a white and a black, to destroy the rats. On it they thrived, and their progeny pullulated. Evidently word of the delicacies she had provided spread quickly, for the rats seemed to double the size of their armies in a day, as well as to increase noticeably in stature. Next the Emperor summoned a witch-doctor from a far province of his empire: she arrived, clad in veils, and cowrie-shells, anointed her enormous body with a special sacred unguent, and danced wildy in every chamber of the palace. Still the rats survived, though she was executed. Then dried herbs were burnt; but still the rats poured in from all directions. Then the most sacred relics were fetched from Ta-Balu, in procession, to the beating of drums made of human skin. Yet the whole country, when seen from the Tower of the Sun, seemed to be moving—and moving centripetally, in one direction.

The Emperor was growing desperate. As he sat in state on his throne of gold in the Hall of the Royal Fetishes—a great apartment hung with countless Venetian mirrors, one above another,

spread haphazard over the walls, the many recesses of which each contained the immense skeleton of a brass bedstead—it seemed to him that the palace was almost empty save for the rats. The mirrors and the polished brass balls of the bedsteads reflected nothing but his own royal countenance; even the pages, in their scarlet liveries and white wigs, which made their faces look still more black, were fewer; they had ‘gone away’—for nobody must mention death to the Emperor. His courtiers *went away*, they never died. The mirrors, then, showed endless vistas of other mirrors, of a dusty, flyblown pomp. The sound characteristic of the palace had become, no longer the throbbing of drums, but the bumping and squeaking of the rats.

From the Hall of the Royal Fetishes the Emperor issued a proclamation that promised a great fortune to any living thing that would destroy the rats. He waited: alas, no slightest diminution of the scuffling occurred—and then, one noon, as he was returning for luncheon from The Hall, through the Great Coronation Corridor of the Golden Wind, as it was called, he saw, laid out with military precision in a long row, stretching from the door to the first of the open arches, the bodies of 151 rats. After the preliminary and instinctive shudder that the sight evoked, the Emperor was, of course, highly delighted. He looked everywhere around him, to see who was responsible for the massacre, but there seemed to be no one present—then, as his eyes searched every possible corner, to his surprise he observed a black cat leap out from hiding, and race along the gallery, until like a tiger it pounced on another black body. Soon the little cat, for it was not a large animal, returned down the middle of the corridor, and boldly placed at His Majesty’s feet the burden it was dragging along, a large, black rat, hardly smaller than itself. The Emperor, much impressed, clapped his hands, and ordered a bowl of zebra’s milk to be brought immediately, so that the cat, his champion, should be able to recruit his strength—and before many weeks had passed, Roxana—for it was she—had killed or driven out by intimidation every rat from the Palace, from the mountain, and from the surrounding plain. In consequence, the plague abated.

It had happened in this way—Mr. Fitzwarren had charged the Captain of his vessel to deliver in person a present to the Emperor, together with a letter. Finding, when he arrived at

Nebaka-Koho that the Court had already left Ta-Balu for *Mon Repos*, accordingly, he rode on in that direction, taking the cat with him. Once Roxy had seen a rat, there was no holding her; her fortune was made—and made it certainly was. For not only did the Emperor decree that a temple was to be built to her, not only did he confer on her the title *Lion Champion and Court Sacred Whisker*, but he bestowed upon her a sack filled with uncut jewels of great value. In addition, he ordered a large emerald to be cut for her ear, and a few weeks later gave an audience—it was safe now to receive people in the palace—to all the foreign ambassadors, and native dukes, and in front of them, as a mark of the imperial favour, had himself clasped the diamond dog-collar round the cat's neck, while the band of the Assassin Guard, dressed in their ceremonial uniform of leopard skins, and high openwork crowns made of human ribs, thumped and brayed in unison a march by Sousa. And further, as final proof of his pleasure, and in order to ensure Roxana's comfort in the future, the Emperor, after inquiring the name of her English master, dispatched to 'Mr. Whittington' as that potentate styled him, by means of Mr. Fitzwarren's ship, an immense treasure, consisting of gold and jewels, rare African drugs and the tusks of elephants, together with an invitation to accompany Roxana back to *Mon Repos* the following summer, and spend some months there.

Eventually, as Dick could see for himself, the ship had arrived safely home. No sooner though, had she been brought to anchor, than the cat, flouting the orders of the Captain and defying the Customs House and the Quarantine officials, had climbed a mast, and, taking a superb leap for the shore, had gone straight home to Dick. Two days later the cargo was unloaded, and the treasure that Roxy had brought Dick proved far to surpass in value the rest of the contents of the ship. Mr. Fitzwarren nevertheless maintained his reputation as a just man, in no way showing disappointment, but on the contrary congratulating Dick and advising him how to invest his fortune. Moreover his generous-minded master promised to find the young man—he was now eighteen—a place in his office. Indeed, everyone, since the news of his good fortune, had formed a high opinion of his character and capacities, and Mr. MacMagnus, who had been the first to divine his latent talents, and who was again

present, pronounced this time, as he watched the cargo being carried off the vessel:

‘That young man has made good!’

When summer came, Mr. Fitzwarren gave Dick permission to accept the Emperor’s invitation, and to take Roxy out to Tongador. The country had completely recovered its customary prosperity, and Dick and his cat were immensely fêted in whatever part of the Empire they travelled. They spent several happy months in *Mon Repos*, and Roxy was very contented on the whole, for she was nearly always in the company of her master. She would sit by his side for hours, by one of the open arches of the Great Coronation Corridor, where first she had made his fortune, watching the birds dip and swing over the brooding summer plain, carolling and turning as if to tempt her. Only then would she become a little restless, making a curious deep sound, mingled of fury and calculation in her throat, while she measured with cocked eye the distance between her and the spire of the nearest cypress, which though its scent was wafted so strongly hither, could not be attained. And again, now that there were no rats to hunt in the palace, she missed the regular exercise; so evidently, that, since the Emperor had appointed to the cat her own slaves, they would occasionally arrange a hunt for her for the day in some outlying portion of the royal domain. Even for these pleasures, she disliked—and showed it plainly—having to be parted from her master, albeit for so short a time.

Fortunately during these expeditions Dick was at no loss to find employment: for business constituted his chief interest, and he had brought it with him. Because Mr. MacMagnus had found an opportunity of speaking to him before he left, and had said:

‘You know, my boy, I have your interests at heart. They’re very backward out there, where you’re going . . . Now, don’t say a word about it to dear old Fitz, he’s a dear old fellow, though so antiquated in his ways, but take out some models of good modern stuff to show the Emperor; you know, the things that make modern countries, and make them great, Bren guns, tanks, flame-throwers. He’s sure to be interested. I’ll supply the models, and if you are successful, I will make it worth your while’ . . . When the Emperor saw the toys, he was, naturally, delighted

and ordered a great many of the originals of each model from Mr. MacMagnus. And already, before Dick had left the country, he had been able to see for himself some of the benefits resulting from his enterprise: for the Emperor had no sooner obtained the articles—and they, together with the bills had been delivered with a praiseworthy promptitude—that, in order to pay for them, he declared war on the neighbouring State of Kobalola. It was rather difficult to do, because the moral reasons for a war had to be thought out quickly, and the Emperor, being an absolute monarch, had to carry out this difficult work for himself. However, he soon issued a moving proclamation:

‘Our patience’, it read, ‘is exhausted. We have long had no aim except to live in peace, only with that purpose in view has our great and unconquerable army been built up. This power we never dreamt of using, until the atrocities of the enemy, committed upon our allies, the Race of the South, compelled us to submit our sword to the dread arbitrament of war. We shall proceed resolutely and unflinchingly towards our goal, to widen the world basis of Democracy, and institute a reign of peace in Kobalola.’

It can be imagined with what a burst of cheering the people of Tongador welcomed the inspiring sentiment and close reasoning of this document. The warriors fought with more than their accustomed bravery, and, before many days had elapsed, the Emperor had entered the enemy capital. Here, Dick and Roxy joined His Majesty, in order to be present at the ceremonies that marked the Peace Treaty. This exacted a large indemnity—or tribute as it used to be called—from the defeated power. And Dick, being, as Mr. MacMagnus had comprehended, an enterprising young man, was able to book a large order from the ruler of it, for machines similar to those employed by the Emperor, but of an improved type.

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When Dick returned to London Mr. MacMagnus was delighted at the manner in which someone so new to business had carried out the suggested transactions. Moreover, divining the real nature of the young man’s genius, he now proposed that, while Dick should remain a further two years with Mr. Fitzwarren so as to learn the details of the business, some of which,

it appeared, were secret, he should, at the end of that period, leave him. Mr. MacMagnus would, in the meantime, found two new concerns, one connected with the making of armaments, the other, of the same kind as Mr. Fitzwarren's, and on Dick joining him, and bringing him the benefit of his experience, he would be made a partner in both. Dick, who, as he used to say, was determined 'to be beholden to nobody', felt that this was an offer he could not afford to refuse—besides, he wished soon to be in a position to propose marriage to Pamela, with whom he was more than ever in love, and he certainly could not expect her to throw herself away on a poor man. . . . For the present, Mr. MacMagnus and Dick both agreed that it would be better to say nothing of their plans for fear of competition.

Things now began to prosper with Dick, and this state itself helped to intensify his run of fortune. Everyone agreed how much he had improved. He had quite shed his old roughness, both of speech and conduct, and was a typical young business man, as smart in his appearance as in the bargains he struck. It would have been difficult to tell that he was not a Londoner bred. Mrs. Grinder now always addressed him as 'Sir' when she saw him, and consulted him, rather than Mr. Fitzwarren, about her own small affairs. As for Pamela, she had begun to return his affection, and Mrs. Grinder now did everything she could to further the match. At the end of two years, when, as arranged with Mr. MacMagnus, Dick picked a quarrel with Mr. Fitzwarren and walked out of the office, Pamela took the part of the young man. Her father was very angry with him at first, but then, as Mrs. Grinder said to Pamela, 'You won't mind my saying it, Miss Pamela, but 'e's getting past it. It's time he retired.' And, indeed, his luck had deserted him, and he had lost much money. On the whole, the world took Dick's side. Indeed, they thought him still further improved. And, before long Dick bought a house of his own—it happened to be the same mansion in which Mr. Fitzwarren had lived in the days of his prosperity.

The cat still followed Dick everywhere, and, when he went to dinner-parties, she had to be locked up, to prevent her escaping, and then hiding outside, or, if possible, entering the house, there lurking unobtrusively in a corner, until the moment came when she could safely make an effective sortie, leaping up, on to the middle of the dinner-table. He was, of course, still very

much attached to her—they were such old companions—but, he could not help feeling a little ashamed on these occasions. Not, he had to admit to himself, that she ever upset anything when she jumped. No, it was not that. ‘But, after all,’ as he remarked one day to Pamela, ‘I mean to say, one doesn’t want a cat dogging a feller’s footsteps all the time—if it *were* a dog, it would be different.’

Pamela agreed with him. ‘You can’t let it go on for ever,’ she advised. ‘Some time you’ll *have* to put a stop to it, and force her to stay at home.’

In fact, though Dick had never been at a public school, his feelings resembles those of a boy, upon some local occasion of festivity, shocked by the non-conformity of his parent’s clothes or conduct. Worse still, the sight of the cat revived old stories. And though Dick was proud of having made his own way—and never ceased to say so—neither he nor Pamela liked to be reminded of it by others. They preferred to administer it as a shock, themselves, to those whom they met—and, at any rate, what had the cat got to do with it?

Yet, though Dick began to dread Roxy’s sudden emergence, there was, he had to admit to himself, nothing unusual now in the cat’s appearance. If she would only stay there and watch him, instead of claiming his acquaintance so openly, not much harm would be done. Nobody would notice. She merely looked a rather old cat—she had begun to age. He had long ago removed the diamonds and rubies—not because they struck an *outré* note (though, indeed, they did), but in case any thief should see them, and trap and kill the cat for their value. They were now in safe custody in the bank in his own name. The emerald was the last jewel the cat retained, but about the time that Pamela became engaged to him, she had pointed out that the emerald, by its weight, might damage the cat’s ear.

‘What a lovely ring it would make!’ she had added, no doubt hardly thinking of what she was saying.

The engagement was not a long one, for Mr. Fitzwarren had lost his fortune owing to increased competition in his business, and Pamela did not wish to be a burden on him. All his flair for his work seemed to have deserted him, and he had grown into a very old man. At the same time, she hardly liked, when she married, to leave him to look after himself, so she gave him a

flat in Dick's house. It was so convenient for him—he knew the place so well—and yet this was the part of it he had known least, so he wouldn't grow tired of it. There were practically no stairs, and servants today did not like stairs—or basements (not that he had any servants, but still it made it more modern, convenient, and 'homey'), and so Pamela had suggested that the basement should be made into a separate flat for him, all of his own. The old gentleman seemed happy there; at any rate he troubled no one—and everyone agreed what a thoughtful, considerate daughter he had. He was lucky—not every daughter was like that nowadays. And when Pamela and Dick went out of an evening, to dine, or to the play, it was pleasant for them to know that they could leave the cat with someone they could trust. Indeed, Mr. Fitzwarren liked having the little creature with him, for he seldom went out or saw anyone. (Even Mr. MacMagnus, when he came to dine with the young people upstairs, used to declare that it would make him too sad to see Mr. Fitzwarren as he was now, he'd been so different in the dear old days—still, of course, he'd go down at once and see him if it would do him any good or help him, but it wouldn't! The old gentleman, on the occasion when Mr. MacMagnus—who was only three years younger—had gone to visit him, had hardly seemed to recognize his old friend, and was very glum. It would only unsettle him again, they agreed. So Mr. Fitzwarren and Roxy would sit together through the long winter evenings, staring into the fire. She seldom escaped—though, of course, twice she contrived to sneak away to a house where Dick and Pamela were dining, and on one occasion to appear on the ledge of their box at a musical comedy. On the whole, however, everything proceeded happily until Pamela, who for a long time had been saying 'Dick, you really *ought* to have a dog', gave him, on his birthday, an Irish terrier called Pat. Then there was no holding Roxy; she knew about it long before she saw the dog—indeed before the dog had arrived at the house. She refused all milk, and even fish, and would not take any nourishment at all. Further, she arched her back, and hissed and spat at her best friends. And she managed to get out of the basement flat and attack her rival without any provocation, scratching his eyes, and ripping his left ear from top to bottom; a mark which poor Pat carried to the end of his days.

For the cat's own sake, this sort of thing could not be allowed to continue. Pamela felt it her duty to speak to Dick about it.

'You ought to give the creature away to someone who lives in the country,' she said, 'she'd be far happier; and all that jumping on the table makes *you* look so unusual. After all, *I* get the blame: I married you—and like every good wife, I want my husband to be just the same as other men—only richer, of course.'

'Darling, I promise to find someone to look after her later on. But I don't like to give her away. I don't know why.'

'It's all very well for you. You don't hear the talk. It's not nice for me—people bring out the whole story of your coming up to London, and say that I've married beneath me. And that I know that I have done so, doesn't make it any better!'

'Darling, please don't say such hard things!!'

'But you oughtn't to put up with it. You ought to show more respect for your wife . . . Besides, it would be kinder to the cat herself.'

'She looks quite well—though we hardly ever see her, really, do we?'

'You should send her right away—otherwise it'll be the same thing all over again. You don't see the sort of stir that goes round, when she appears. You complain that it makes *you* look a fool, but what about me?'

'I didn't say so, darling: you said it.'

'Please don't interrupt and contradict me, Dick, when we're talking of serious matters.'

At the moment, though, Pamela saw she could accomplish nothing. It was better to wait. So she put up with the cat until one day it got upstairs, into the drawing-room and hid there. Some friends had come to see her, and after tea they asked her to play the piano to them. She had begun to give them her favourite Chopin Prelude, and was almost in the middle of it, when Roxy, from her place of concealment, howled in so loud, piercing and heart-rending a tone, that Pamela had been obliged to stop. *That*, she realized, *had* made her look silly: she could not go on . . . In fact, not only was Roxy damaging Dick, she was a nuisance in the house.

Next time she approached the matter more softly, more obliquely.

'Darling,' she said to her husband one morning, 'Daddy's beginning to look such an old crock now, I'm sure country air is what he needs! It would do him *so* much good, and after all he is my father! . . . So I've asked Tickle and Galbraith to look out for a cottage in Cornwall. It's such a wonderful climate, they say . . . Only, he mustn't be allowed to feel lonely at his age, so I thought we could send Roxy down too, to keep him company—then he'll be quite happy.'

As she had hoped, Dick fell in with this plan . . . But the truth of the matter was, the cat was getting beyond herself. Even in the taxi on her way to the station, she scratched and roared inside her hamper like a tiger. In the station, it was worse—and no sooner had she arrived than she was back again. How she made the distance from Cornwall to London in the time, it was impossible to imagine. She hadn't arrived at the cottage till past midnight—but the very next evening, when Pamela and Dick had gone out to dine with Lord and Lady Nuggett (he was head of the great cartel which had recently been formed with the object of helping backward countries to become forward), there was a sudden commotion, and Roxy leapt like a steeplechaser over the extended arm of the footman, who was in the act of offering a gold platter to the chief guest, into the middle of the table, just in front of Dick. . . . Naturally, the story revived. Even Dick began to feel more strongly about Roxy's behaviour. One didn't want the whole thing raked up again.

Worse still, the cat proved to have become a thief. Usually Pamela wore the emerald ring, but one day, when she was not wearing it, and when the cat had come up to London secretly, Pamela, herself unseen, observed the animal deliberately go up to the jewel-box—which was unlocked—open it with teeth and paws, and then try to sneak off, carrying the wonderful gem in her mouth. When Pamela attempted to take it away, she fought like a fury. Fortunately, Dick was near, and directly he spoke to the cat, she gave it up quietly and lay on her back, as if she expected him to play with her.

The next day, Pamela, who had been for some time considering the whole matter of the cat, tried a new line of approach, and a new plan.

'Richard,' she said—she had begun to call him Richard by

now, it was such a much nicer name, she thought, than Dick—‘Richard, you’re so fond of cats, I wonder you don’t start an almshouse for old cats. It would do so much good—and you’re rich enough to afford it now. They’ve done a lot for you, you know, in your career: now it is up to you to do something for them. It would help to raise the whole status of the cat in society. And your cat, dear little Roxy—I’ve grown so fond of her—could be the first there, with a really good endowment policy. She’s growing old now, and deserves to be properly looked after. I’m afraid she’s not really happy with Daddy in Cornwall, or she’d stay down there, and not try so often to get away—and it shows too, that he can’t exercise proper supervision. Perhaps she’d be more contented in London again. And it will be easier for other cat-lovers, if the home is built here. . . . And I’ve found such a nice capable man to organize everything. He’s had a great deal of experience, and is thoroughly reliable. . . . He was a warder at Dartmoor for a long time.’

The idea appealed to Dick. Within the space of a year, *The Whittington Central Cats’ Aid Society and Sanatorium*—about which you asked me—was completed at great expense.

But, as Lady Whittington (Dick was now Sir Richard, having entered on his first term of office as Lord Mayor of London) pointed out, it would not be fair for him to have to find *all* the money for the charity, even though it had been his idea, and he was so wealthy now. He must remember that he had done it in honour of Roxy, and, after all, the cat was a rich cat. Luckily, for once he was prepared to listen to reason, and sold some of the animal’s jewels to defray part of the cost of the home. . . . The details of it had been thought out with the greatest care, and one well could see why it had cost so much money. There was a proper staff of attendants provided, and each cat—but at first there was only one cat in the building—had its own comfortable cage and chain.

Unfortunately, within a week of the Sanatorium being opened—and it had been done most discreetly, without any flourish in the Press, for as Lady Whittington used to say, ‘Publicity would spoil the spirit of the thing, somehow’—Roxy escaped, hid in a crowd, and took a flying leap out of it and in at the window of the Lord Mayor’s coach, as it passed during one of his civic progresses. It now became impossible to keep the

news of the Lord Mayor's charitable deed quiet any longer, for the attendants, who had been given very strict orders to guard the cat that day, in their anxiety to secure the animal, came running and pushing helter-skelter through the jostling onlookers, who pressed together and lined the pavement behind the police. Of course the Press took up the story.

'CAT BRINGS FORTUNE TO LORD MAYOR!'

'GRATEFUL LORD MAYOR FOUNDS CATS' HOME.'

'THE ROMANCE OF A CITY CAT.'

'A LORD MAYOR WHO LOVES CATS.'

'STORY OF PENNILESS BOY AND CAT WHO BROUGHT HIM FORTUNE.'

'FROM MANSION-HOUSE TO CATS' HOME.'

These were some of the regrettably sensational headings.

Each time the cat slipped its collar, the story grew. Londoners never tired of it. There was no peace for the Lord Mayor. At night, in his immense four-poster bed at the Mansion-House, Sir Richard would lie awake for hours. The fire burning in the grate would throw the shadows of the plumes that crowned the bed upon the wall; sometimes it would show palm trees, then the shadows would coalesce back into momentary chaos, and reform themselves, of a sudden, into the momentary likeness of a gigantic black cat, glaring at him. He would be wide awake again, and no sooner had he with the greatest difficulty at last got to sleep, than a gentle mewling would wake him—and there would be Roxy! . . . It used to distress Lady Whittington even more, to think of the cat, at her age, out in the cold night like that! And how she contrived her sudden disappearances from the Home, it was difficult to make out; for windows and doors were shut and bolted, and a fire was kept burning—so she could not have got up the chimney. No attendants, no bribes of milk or mice, no iron bars, could keep her away from Sir Richard Whittington.

The Whittingtons now placed all their hopes in a new idea—in *The Cats' Charterhouse* that, at Lady Whittington's suggestion, Sir Richard had decided to found in Gloucestershire, in the grounds of his own country house, so that his wife could herself, from time to time, keep an eye on the place and see that the cats were comfortable . . . But it was of no use. The moment Dick

came to London, Roxy appeared too, and so old and mangy now, so gaunt and prophetic in her look, that it was difficult to recognize in her the purring black kitten that once she had been. You could almost hear the animal's bones creak as she jumped . . . Next, Sir Richard and his wife began to deceive themselves with hopes of the new *Cats' Provident Society Almshouse* in the Outer Hebrides. Surely, there Roxana would be content to rest, appalled by the length and difficulties of her journey. . . . But not at all! This time she turned up at a small dinner-party at the Mansion-House, her fur still wet as the hair of the Old Man of the Sea from her long swim. It was fortunate that they were in their own house. The cat was captured and sent back, under an escort of two warders, to her island home, and the servants were warned, and several of them dismissed. So it went on, and naturally, the matter was often referred to, in the Press, and by the world in general.

The worst scandal of all was undoubtedly that of which I told you at the beginning, and which happened during Sir Richard's third term as Lord Mayor, at the inaugural Guildhall Banquet. You will remember that we left Lady Whittington giving a tactful and ingenious interview to the members of the Press. She had explained the medical causes of her husband's fainting, and had stated forthrightly, that he owed his rise in the world to his own exertions, and not to the help of any cat.

'It is just one of those silly stories that so easily gain currency in times of stress,' she added, 'no one knows *how*. And though ordinarily, I should treat it as too unimportant a matter to waste my breath over, I ought, perhaps, to deny it for the children's sake.' And then she proceeded to supply quite plausible explanations of how these tales had originated. 'In my opinion,' she continued, 'it is due chiefly to ignorance. Even today few people, comparatively, speak French—and still fewer spoke it thirty years ago. But Sir Richard in his early days travelled a good deal, and spoke French fluently. Talking it so well, he became fond of the language, and it was one of his ways as a young man, even when speaking English, to introduce frequently a French word or phrase. And so, when strangers used to ask him "To what do you attribute your great success?" my husband has often, in my hearing, answered "In the first place to *achat*"—or, in plain English, "to purchases". These people, knowing no French,

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and consequently misunderstanding what he said, would go away and tell their friends "Whittington himself told me he owed his fortune to a *chat*, or cat". In a similar fashion, certain persons eager for sensation, and ready to seize on any evidence for the manufacture of a story—and you gentlemen of the Press know that such persons can always be found—have twisted to their purpose something else my husband used to say. In the course of building up the great industry that my husband and Lord MacMagnus founded, it was necessary for the firm to acquire its own mines, round Newcastle in point of fact, and to have its own fleet of ships to bring the coal south. For this purpose, my husband found the most convenient vessel to be a Norwegian type called in that language, a *cat*. Accordingly the fleet of ships was similarly called cats. And often, when I've visited Sir Richard at the works, I've heard him make some remark like this: 'I've been waiting for my cat all day', or 'I can't think what we should do without our cat!' . . . *Those* are the cats of which you talk! And in the same way, there's that stupid tale of a cat having brought him a fortune from the negroes! That is due to the sailors on the colliers having black faces from the coal dust. . . . Except the cats of which I've told you, I know of no cat in my husband's life.'

Just as she said this, while the words were still on her lips, a scratching sounded at the door of the room, and the journalist I have already had cause to mention, opened it before Lady Whittington could stop him. A cat—plainly the same that had been seen previously at the Banquet—dashed in, looked round, and then fled out again, and up the stairs to her master's bedroom, where he lay, under his plumed canopy, more seriously ill than his wife realized.

He died a rich man. But it was found that by some strange freak, he had altered his will, only a few days before his death, and had left his whole enormous fortune to the maintenance of his various cats' homes. Lady Whittington had to part with her jewels, and passed the remaining years of her life in seclusion in her late father's cottage in Cornwall. She seemed, as she grew older, to become a very ordinary old lady, except that her neighbours noticed how fiercely, even though she was now rather infirm, she would shoo away any cat that strayed into the garden or attempted to enter the house.

As for Roxana, she was never seen again. Some say she was poisoned, and that the Lord Mayor's State Bedroom at the Mansion-House is haunted by her spectre, though others maintain that this loyal and gifted cat, after her master's decease, made her way back to the scene of her former splendours, ending her life in *Mon Repos* as the honoured guest of the Emperor. But this second report does not seem to me altogether likely, for Sir Richard's great business capacity and enterprise had been responsible for supplying every kingdom in those regions with the most advanced weapons of modern warfare, and, by the time each of these countries had given the rest a New Order, and had then liberated one another, it is not to be supposed that many dwellings, many Emperors—or many subjects—were left. . . . And the most glorious war of all, the Crusade for the Lowest Common Denominator, was still to come. But, at least, it has been stated in the last few weeks by reputable travellers that the Temple the Emperor raised to Roxana still stands unscathed in the remote mountains of Tongador.

SELECTED NOTICES

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE PUBLIC¹

By EDWARD GLOVER

FOR some time past the popular attitude to 'Psychology' has become increasingly complacent. This change in reaction is the more remarkable in that it cannot be attributed to increased understanding on the part of the general public. Man has always been afraid of his mind or, as we would now say more accurately, afraid of his unconscious mind; consequently he has reacted to the study of psychology with a superstitious dread which is often thinly concealed by contempt or indignation. The reaction has been enhanced by three circumstances. As organic medicine began to free itself from obscurantist traditions and became a more respectable 'science', fears of the mysteries of the body were transferred to existing fears of the mysteries of the mind. The other and more important factors were the discovery by Freud of the unconscious mind and the development of psycho-analysis which owes its existence to that discovery. Ancient fears of magic and mesmerism were promptly displaced by the new science. Indeed a good deal of the early abuse of psycho-analysis was due not so much to its supposedly pan-sexual views—a myth which is still extremely tenacious of life—as to the fact that study of the unconscious mind was identified in the popular imagination with dabbling in the occult.

¹ John Layard: *The Lady of the Hare*: a study in the healing power of Dreams. London, Faber & Faber. 12s. 6d. net.

A similar explanation may be given of the lively though uninstructed interest at one time taken in the defection from psycho-analysis of some of Freud's early adherents, in particular Jung and Adler. Their repudiation of fundamental Freudian principles must have been a comfort to all who had been shocked by the, usually garbled, accounts they had heard or read of Freudian psychology. To this day it is a comfort to academic psychologists to point to the existence of warring 'schools' of clinical psychology; and well-meaning general physicians vie with less well-meaning psychiatrists to draw the preposterous conclusion that because Jung and Adler disagreed with Freud, the monumental structure of Freud's unconscious psychology must rest on shaky foundations. So when it appears that 'psychology' itself is being accepted as 'respectable' we may reasonably suspect either that the public has developed fresh misconceptions on the subject or that the psychology they now come in contact with has in fact become more 'respectable', that is to say less realistic. Actually there is some truth in both surmises.

If we ask ourselves what 'psychology' is generally supposed to mean the answer is that in the great majority of cases no supposition at all exists. Setting these cases aside, we conjecture that 'psychology' is popularly identified with 'psycho-analysis' and 'psycho-analysis' with 'Freud', but a rectified Freud, unobjectionable and even salutary when administered in a highly diluted form by some non-Freudian 'specialist'. No doubt there are some in whose imagination 'psychology' is pictured as a sort of hyphenated monster answering to the name of 'Freud-Jung-Adler'. This misconception was strengthened when, not long before the present war, 'Psychiatry' awoke from its non-psychological slumbers in mental hospitals to find that it had been invested with psychological attributes overnight. And with the expansion of army psychiatric services, whose personnel is largely recruited from asylum officers, a rapid deterioration of psychological science has in fact set in. War is a bad time for 'depth' psychology and it will take anything from 20 to 50 years to recover the ground lost by pitchforking psychologically untrained psychiatrists into the field of mental science.

But whereas we may hope that sooner or later this misfortune will be overcome, the same cannot be said of the Eclectic Psychologist who, it is to be feared, we shall always have with us. The term denotes not any coherent school of thought, but merely a class of unclassifiables having in common a perhaps excessive disregard for the claims of logical consistency. For although it is possible to take a little bit of Freud, a little bit of Jung and a little bit of Adler, the bits are, even for practical purposes, extremely small. In matters of principle, Freud and Jung are poles apart while Adler inhabits an entirely distinct and not very important planet. Among the Eclectics are many very useful persons, aiming at, and in favourable cases obtaining quick therapeutic results; or, at worst, intervening between the sufferer on one hand and on the other the massed misunderstandings and moral indignation of his family, his family doctor and himself.

Besides this practical and pedestrian kind of Eclectic we have a sublimer race of beings whose only discernible object is to astound. These very often affect a sort of super-Freudianism mixed up with anything else they fancy. A favourite dodge is to pity and revile Freud for his initial errors with the

implication that these errors were ultimately corrected not by Freud but by the triumphant super-Freudian and his allies. The typical Eclectic has often an instructive tendency to edge away from the Deep (Freudian) Unconscious, preferring (superstitiously) the term Subconscious, which has the advantage of meaning anything or nothing. Sometimes he seems to have no suspicion of any distinction of meaning between the two terms.

Omitting many interesting varieties of Eclectic Psychologist, we are now obliged to introduce the Crank: one whose main interest is a fad or good intention of some sort accidentally linked up with something supposed to be of a psychological nature, perhaps merely a small but ill-chosen vocabulary, perhaps a fairly ambitious system (of nonsense) based on a fairly complete misunderstanding of Freudian, Jungian, or some other psychological doctrine. For the Crank's purpose Freud has the advantage of notoriety, but combines less readily with pure mush than do some of his competitors. Jung has obvious attractions, chiefly his turn for uplift, also perhaps his curious fairy-tale symbolism so readily transformed by ignorance into a mythology. Adler too, has his appeal having fathered a simple one-way system to counter the complexities of mental life, but on the other hand his barren simplicity does not lend itself to the mystical afforestations of the Crank.

Mr. Layard, author of the book now before us, has chosen to attach himself to the skirts of the Jungians. Not unwisely: feeling perhaps that 'his nonsense suits their nonsense'. The result is more *palpable* nonsense than he could probably have produced alone. The Jungian collective Unconscious (or his notion thereof) does give him something to muddle himself about. Without some such 'framework' he must have wallowed indefinitely in the foamy seas of his own revivalistic emotions and might perhaps never have become a psychologist. It was, significantly enough, a country parson who had the idea of prescribing 'psychology' for the troubles of a young parishioner, 'Margaret Wright', and 'psychology' was luckily forthcoming in the shape of Mr. Layard, who readily consented to try what he could do. Margaret, however, who was mentally defective to begin with, was in such a state of internal tension as to be inaccessible to a direct approach; so Mr. Layard decided to tackle the problem from an environmental angle. Not at all a bad idea either. It is well over twenty-five years since Abraham pointed out that the neuroses of mothers can, *via* the unconscious, stimulate the formation of neuroses in their children. And for a long time now child-psychologists of all brands have sought to bring influence to bear on their patients by contacting (and sometimes by analysing) the parents. It is equally well known that defective children are even more sensitive to unconscious anxieties than neurotic children, although the muted exterior of their minds has even less chance of expressing such fears. And since defective children are almost invariably handled with unwisdom, they naturally respond by retreating into their lonely interiors, from which it takes a good deal of love and reassurance to entice and rescue them.

It is all the more curious therefore that Mr. Layard should have passed over the claims of an unlucky neurotic 'Aunt Bertha' (who, living in the 'Wright' household, was the bane of Margaret's life as Margaret was of hers) to attack the problem *via* the girl's mother 'Mrs. Wright', the predestined Lady of the Hare.

In her he discerned rare and lofty qualities (of intuition and so forth) under the simple exterior of an elderly countrywoman unspoiled by so-called education, a midwife by trade, a Northern Irishwoman by birth, by early upbringing a Presbyterian. The presentation is not unlikelike: we are able to develop from what we are told certain further qualities: particularly an obliging readiness to flatter and be flattered, and a censorious attitude towards the female part of humanity, together with a tolerable conceit of herself. This was the human instrument Mr. Layard now sought to temper by the enlightening and at the same time curative or, to adopt his terminology, redemptive process of Dream Analysis.

Here we should note that dreams (according to Mr. Layard) may be taken as being 'of God' if we know how to read and profit by the messages they contain, but 'equally of the devil' if we do not. This, if it made sense, might seem alarming; but Mr. Layard, rightly undismayed, proceeds to make a somewhat arbitrary mess of the very few old dreams and visions which are all Mrs. Wright has to show for a lifetime of fifty-four years. They are fortunately sufficient to prove that there is something askew in Mrs. Wright's inner life: she is not entirely faultless. Like Mr. Darcy, however, she has chosen her faults well: a little over-righteousness, an excessive purity, and (very naturally) a little pride. To all this, and to the subsequent discovery that she has for a long time been inadvertently *exercising a maleficent influence on*, or in the simpler tongue of our forefathers, bewitching her daughter, the patient reacts with modest equanimity.

Meanwhile the dreams have become numerous and of the most redemptive sort. Visionary Blood Sacrifices, notably that of the Hare, symbolize and promote the transformation of the dreamer's 'instincts' into 'spiritual power'. 'Instincts', we are told, 'desire' to be so transmuted. Behind this statement there lie unplumbed depths of psychological confusion. A clearer head than Mr. Layard's might have perceived the advantages of always holding fast to symbolism: the idea of a hare bent on 'transformation' (self-immolation) is silly enough but not actually inconceivable. This numinous beast, the *Self-Immolating Hare*, first appears in modest circumstances. Mrs. Wright dreams that she finds him occupying a bowl in the kitchen of a cousin's house in Ireland; she is required to kill him, and does so rather incompetently with a kitchen knife. The hare manifests no concern in the proceedings: 'The hare never moved and did not seem to mind'.

Mr. Layard however, minded greatly. In Mrs. Wright's accommodating memory the nonchalance of the hare is retrospectively improved into a 'look of extreme satisfaction and trust'. (This occurs in connection with the dream sacrifice of a local tradesman, a handsome young Jew.) But the self-immolating hare becomes the hero of the book: though it was not until a couple of years later that Mr. Layard discovered him in Buddhist mythology; all that is most ancient and archetypal. The creature likewise, we are told, immolates himself to this day in the fields of County Armagh, Northern Ireland; which might be thought to abate the wonder of his appearance in the consciousness of Mrs. Wright, but Mr. Layard seems not to notice this. The *ancient archetypal* of his dream is somehow combined with the discovery and cure of the negative *articipation mystique* exercised by the lady on her child. And Mythical

Hares of all kinds romp freely through the last and much the longest section of the book (pp. 100–227).

Returning to Mrs. Wright, we find her passing from ritual symbolism to ‘intellectual’ instruction. After some talk of a dream featuring a Black Pony drawing a load of three-leaved clover we hear Mr. Layard saying to his patient, ‘What is it that is against God? . . . Well, God is light, isn’t He? Then evil is dark, that means, what we don’t know’ . . . ‘God can be a Destroyer as well as a Creator, for all things are possible to Him. He rules over the night as well as the day. But if we say He rules only over the day, what happens to the night? . . .’ (Of the Black Pony) ‘He is the hidden fourth Power representing, like all animals, the instinctive reactions that we in our present civilization have tended to lose through our too great concentration on the light side of the godhead, thereby neglecting the dark . . .’ (Instinct was represented by the Pony and) ‘it was to the Pony that the Teacher’ (a dream-figure) ‘referred as being “the one higher than God”, meaning not that he *was* higher than God, for as we have seen, the two should be equal and married but that he must for the moment be *represented* as higher because our instincts had been too much neglected’ . . .

Mr. Layard’s divinity has perhaps delighted us long enough. It remains to inquire what the therapeutic results have been. Reports are up to a point reassuring: Mrs. Wright herself who seems never to have had anything much the matter with her, has gained in stability and diffuses blessedness. The neurotic aunt is more or less cured through the merits of her sister of (seasonal) swooning and of quarrelling with Margaret. From the same cause, or perhaps because of the removal of her mother’s aforementioned maleficent influences (negative *participation mystique*) Margaret has learned to speak up nicely, take an interest in her clothes, and love her Aunt Bertha. Apparently too, she has lost her addiction to miscellaneous reading, formerly much and adversely commented upon. Further news arrived about two years after the end of the mother’s formal analysis: Margaret (by her mother’s account) had continued to improve. A phase of daylight visions developed into ‘second sight’. Visionary perceptions of a long-deceased grandfather became merged with the traditional figure of Bonnie Prince Charlie—whom Mr. Layard regards as a probable ‘legendary hero’ for a ‘loyal Northern Irish family’ strangely, we think, however Scottish their descent. This Royal ‘concept’ however, merged into or was replaced by a higher concept still, that of the Heavenly Father, under whose direct guidance she now believes herself to be’. It is almost needless to add that she is developing a ‘power for spiritual healing’, happily protected by her ‘so-called mental deficiency’ from the illusory belief that disease of the body is anything other than a disguised disease of the soul.

Further volumes are to be devoted to all these matters. But we need not wait for their appearance to say roundly that neither the validity of Jung’s psychology, nor any of the controversies between followers of different ‘schools’ can be affected by any part of this book. Nor is this judgement altered one whit by the fact that Mr. Layard has padded out his essay with a collection of myth and folklore regarding the Hare. By itself and shorn of the interpretations which Mr. Layard freely interpolates, this part would make a useful addition to an anthropologist’s collection of pamphlets. As a background to

Mr. Layard's theses it is of no value, for the theses depend on Mr. Layard's arbitrary interpretations, and the nature and function of myth cannot be determined by a brand of interpretation for all the world like the marginal comments on the Song of Solomon to be found in the Authorized Version. Had Mrs. Wright's Ninth Dream concerned the gutting of a herring, it would have been equally possible to produce a volume entitled 'The Lady of the Herring', containing abundant references to the mythology of the Fish, including even polite allusion to its universal employment as a phallic symbol.

But in that case, it may be asked, why bother to give Mr. Layard more than a three-line reference. There are I think, two good reasons for bothering. In the first place informed reviewers can exercise a considerable and beneficent influence by spreading objective information about psychology. If they are not well informed they can, even if inadvertently, do their readers a disservice by suggesting that any new book of arty format and precious title represents a milestone in psychological progress. Having forgotten or never having heard of the earlier stages of psychological controversy, they may hail as new and potent wine some heady brand of ginger beer that has been poured into old wine bottles.

The second reason is even more important. As I have said, the Eclectics we shall always have with us; and as they grow in numbers, the impression will no doubt be created that the old controversies between Freudians, Jungians and Adlerians have given place to a happy eclectic concert. Now to a certain extent it is true that the controversies have died down but that is largely because a newer generation of adherents are too busy with their own practices to bother about the said old controversies. In a sense of course they are well advised because they will seldom or never succeed in influencing their opponents. Nevertheless the issues remain and cannot be burked or glossed over. The Freudian will continue to maintain that you cannot abandon the libido theory, the theory of repression and the dynamics of transference, and remain a Freudian. He will never accept the picturesque Jungian concept of the collective unconscious and all it connotes in place of Freud's orderly conception of the relation of the Id to the various structures and institutions to be found in the unconscious mind. Although aware that the earliest phases of mental development are still for the greatest part *terra incognita* the Freudian holds that this lack of knowledge cannot be compensated by a vague concept which is incapable of expression in terms of mental structure, economy and dynamics. Until he knows more he will cling to the basic formulations regarding the mental apparatus which were laid down by Freud and which have served to this day to keep our heads clear when faced with the complicated problems of mental research.

Apart from this it has to be borne in mind that Jung and Adler, although the best known, were not the only dissidents from Freudian psychology. They were followed by Rank seeking to develop in his Birth Trauma Theory a monistic explanation of mental development and disorder. Even at the present time the urge to reconstruct early stages of development has, in this country at any rate, led to a split in psycho-analytical circles. Already the Klein theory, which, although not strictly speaking monistic, attributes an overwhelming preponderance to the developmental significance of the instincts of aggression, and

has given rise to a 'reconstruction' of a so-called 'depressive position' existing at the third month of life and due to the infant's sense of overwhelming loss arising from the imagined destruction inside itself of the all-loving mother. Orthodox Freudians have already challenged this as a mystical deviation. And no doubt from time to time other deviations will arise and will require to be challenged with equal vigour. The fact is that the issues of modern clinical psychology are not simply therapeutic issues to be settled by some kind of Gentleman's Agreement. No clinical issue will be determined by therapeutic results alone. Many patients would get quite well if only a golliwog were put in the psychologist's chair having some mechanical contrivance capable of saying from time to time 'what does that bring to your mind' or 'you must become more aware of your redemptive process'. The psycho-analysis of Freud is not simply a psycho-therapeutic process; it lays down certain fundamental conceptions which are and will remain the test of all future progress in mental science.

L'Esistenzialismo. By Guido de Ruggiero. Gius, Laterza & Figli (Bari), L. 8.00.

EXISTENTIALISM is upon us. It dominated the thought of continental Europe before the war. We caught occasional whiffs of it in the work of Berdyaev, Unamuno, Shestov and the Protestant theologians. The names of the German existential philosophers, Heidegger and Jaspers, had been distantly heard. Kierkegaard, the *fons et origo*, was being issued under quiet, Anglican auspices by the Oxford University Press. Now the lid is off Europe, and we are appalled by the nightmare shapes which existentialism has assumed in our absence. Or perhaps we are not appalled. Perhaps, like Rudolph Friedmann, we dub 'existential' that which meets with our approval by reason of its thoroughness, profundity and gloom. But the more timid are appalled. Those who read in these pages Philip Toynbee's optimistic survey of French literature during the occupation may care to set against it an article by Claude Magny in the December issue of *La France Libre*. A philosophy which originated in Christian faith has become, in France, a philosophical *danse macabre* whose first assumptions are atheistic, nihilistic and desperate. '*La littérature et la philosophie d'à présent développent jusque dans ses dernières conséquences la "mort de Dieu" prophétisée par Nietzsche . . . L'émotion métaphysique se glissera partout, on la verra sourdre derrière chacun de ses mots, comme l'eau envahit les traces de pas laissées sur un sol marécageux . . .*' Italy provides confirmation in the form of a monograph which, containing perhaps the most acute criticism of the Kierkegaardian position yet made, opens with references (at first incomprehensible to a native of this backward land) to a body of thought which is in essence metaphysical pornography. '*C'è di più nell'esistenzialismo qualcosa che eccita la fantasia con la curiosità morbosa di un romanzo giallo.*'¹

This monograph is an epilogue to and has already been incorporated in the second edition of Ruggiero's *Filosofi del Novecento* (Laterza, L. 50), itself a

¹ 'There is moreover something in existentialism which excites the imagination with the morbid curiosity of a thriller.' Signor de Ruggiero goes on to express surprise that the professors should line themselves up with 'authors or assiduous readers of thrillers' (*romanzi gialli*, yellow novels). It is possible that in Italy thrillers are not written and read by professors.

continuation of *La Filosofia contemporanea*, of which we have already had a taste in Collingwood's translation. Ruggiero writes from the point of view of Italian idealism, which stems from Hegel (against whom Kierkegaard was in open revolt) and whose chief representative, Benedetto Croce, has been getting his photograph even in the English newspapers lately. Ruggiero deals in some detail with Kierkegaard himself, with Heidegger, Jaspers and the senior French existentialist, Gabriel Marcel. He concludes with a formal critique of the existentialist categories and describes his monograph as '*un giudizio molto limitativo, che riconduca . . . la così detta filosofia dell' esistenza . . . nei confini della sua realtà di fatto . . . oltre i quali è venuta rapidamente dilagando*' ('a strictly limited judgement, which will lead the so-called philosophy of existence back within the bounds of its factual reality, beyond which it is rapidly overflowing'). In other words, Ruggiero wishes to stop the rot. It may be that a necessarily constricted review of his lucid exposition may help in a small way to prevent the rot ever setting in here. If it does not (and perhaps it is better that we should have this new influenza and get it over), at least we can study a programme before the curtain rises and watch with amusement instead of mere perplexity. As to mixed metaphors, we shall have to accustom ourselves to those.

'Kierkegaard non è un filosofo nel senso tradizionale della parola; ma è un' anima religiosa che, lottando contro la filosofia, ha filosofato suo malgrado' ('Kierkegaard is not a philosopher in the traditional sense of the word; he is a religious soul who, battling against philosophy, philosophized in spite of himself'). Kierkegaard, as Rudolph Friedmann showed in these pages in October 1943, dramatized his own interior conflict in metaphysical and theological terms. Essentially, he opposed to the Hegelian dialectic the reality of his own life. Hegel 'mediated' and reconciled all opposites into a cheerful, harmonious 'synthesis'. Kierkegaard affirmed, in effect: 'These opposites are not reconciled in me. They co-exist in me with eternal and unbearable tension. Therefore, Hegel's "mediation" is a mere piece of intellectual juggling.' To the objective world of Hegel (from which it sometimes appears that the human individual has been omitted) Kierkegaard opposed subjective experience, 'the interest of metaphysics and at the same time the interest upon which metaphysics founders',¹ metaphysics being of necessity 'disinterested'. '*Per Hegel l'idea di una forza che non si esprime, di un sentimento del tutto interno, è un idolo dell' immaginazione romantica. Per lui, tutto è aperto, tutto è pubblico, tutto è rivelato.*' ('For Hegel, the idea of an unexpressed force, of a wholly inward feeling, is a figment of the romantic imagination. For him, everything is open, everything is public, everything is revealed'.) To this total 'outwardness' of Hegel, Kierkegaard opposes a total 'inwardness'. Herbert Read has popularized the German form of the word, '*Innerlichkeit*'. The Danish is '*Indesluttethed*'. The human situation is through and through intolerable. '*Angst*' ('dread', 'anguish' or, in the Freudian sense, 'anxiety') is its natural condition. From the condition of dread, man emerges, not by 'mediation' and synthesis, but by a 'religious movement', a decisive, irrational 'leap', an act of faith 'by virtue of the absurd', transcendence supervening upon an 'earthquake' or a 'thunderstorm'. In the subjective co-existence of the opposites, sin requires redemption, the finite the infinite, time the eternal, existence being. '*Il tempo si arresterebbe senza quell'*

¹ *Repetition*. Transl. Lowrie (O.U.P.), p. 34.

ansia di eternità che urge e preme in esso: la grazia divina cesserebbe dal prodigarsi senza l'assillo continuo del peccato che la sollecita e la rivela. ('Time would stop without this longing for eternity which hurries and constrains it; divine grace would cease to flow without the continual sting of sin which solicits and reveals it'.) 'Angst' is the immediate and mysterious contact of time and eternity, finite and infinite. 'E la scintilla guizzante dall'urto di due ignoti, dell'individuo e di Dio.' ('It is the flashing spark of shock between two unknowns, the individual and God.') That is Kierkegaard's position. He is an 'irrationalist'. He is a 'personalist'. Ruggiero points out that, in stating a position at all, Kierkegaard is compelled to universalize a personal reaction. This is, of course, the pitfall which lies before the feet of all those who begin to talk about 'the individual'. Ruggiero also points out that, from the outset, Kierkegaard's attack on Hegel's 'mediation' brings him into conflict with Christian experience itself, 'which is shot through with the idea of mediation and the divine mediator.'¹ Furthermore, Kierkegaard is unable to sustain throughout the immediacy and the indifference of the opposites. 'Kierkegaard himself seems conscious of this at times, when he forgets his logic of paradox and conceives the opposites as alternatives which must be faced by decision and choice. At these times he speaks of a logic of dilemma which takes the place of the logic of identity, without realizing that decision has not merely to see eye to eye with logic but expresses an altogether different spiritual process. . . . The negative, painful note prevails over the positive which would like to be present but cannot because the joy of liberation is precluded.'

With Martin Heidegger, we come to existential philosophy proper. That is to say, to a systematic thought hypostasized from the biography of the thinker and already largely divorced from any form of religious experience. To Heidegger, man's life is a journey in the form of a parabola from void to void. Man is afflicted with a sense of nothingness. Is this due to his false, negating vision, or is it a true reflection of reality? Heidegger believes that it is the latter. 'Angst' is a true reflection of the original void. *Existenz* is, to Heidegger, that by which man opposes himself to the fleeting, rudimentary, fallen *Dasein*. To be in the world is itself a transcendence, but it is 'a continually mobile project, a sketch'. Existence, proceeding from a fall, is guilt. But it is also liberty. 'The sequence of the moments of time symbolizes the continual displacement of the *Dasein* confronted by itself, its running together without ever uniting.' To 'Angst' add 'Sorge' ('preoccupation', 'care'), the sentimental reflection of this mobile temporality and the mediocrity of daily life. Life is a perpetual flight from death. Free acceptance of death (the forward-looking aspect of existence, of which 'Sorge' is the hindward glance) alone redeems and ennobles man.

Heidegger has already performed a part of that professorial depersonalization of his work which Kierkegaard feared. 'His anguish before the void is not the anguish of the sinner who annihilates himself before God,' and, emptied of personal, religious content, 'the categories of existentialism seem displaced in

¹ A peculiar correspondence may be observed at this point. Friedmann, approaching Kierkegaard from a purely psycho-analytic standpoint, remarked that Kierkegaard showed a marked tendency to by-pass the divine mediator or to take his place in a direct struggle with God the Father.

an unreal world and take on the consistency of fantasies.' Heidegger has deliberately turned his face away not only from the 'values' but from 'the more positive sentimental tonalities like joy, enthusiasm, dedication, which could overcome preoccupation and anguish'. The paradox is that Heidegger, instead of giving us the sense of individual existence ('*lucis a non lucendo*', comments Ruggiero) at its most acute, has in fact rendered to us the life and written the philosophy of the anonymous, preoccupied mass, immersed in diurnal banality, achieving dignity, if at all, only in the moment of death. The interest of Heidegger's metaphysics does not extend beyond 'the contractions of the human mask'.

The chief addition made by Karl Jaspers to the philosophy of existence is the notion of 'shipwreck' (cf. Kierkegaard's 'earthquake' and 'thunderstorm'). Jasper's vision is altogether more dramatic and possibly more German. He postulates a law of the day and a law of the night ('earth', 'blood', 'race', words with enormous contemporary echoes). His picture of history is strongly reminiscent of Spengler.

The background of Gabriel Marcel is Catholic. Temperamentally a 'tortured' writer, he is nevertheless subject to more calming influences such as that of Maritain who at least uses the magic word in characterising the music of Lourié as '*une musique existentielle et ontologique*'. Marcel takes from Kierkegaard the immediacy of opposites, but is congenitally and by upbringing far from antagonistic to Hegelian mediation. He is also strongly disposed towards bodily sensation and the paradisaical immediacy of apprehensions untainted by the knowledge of good and evil, truth and falsehood. Life is the broken path to God. 'We are or make ourselves immanent to what transcends us, participating in an ineffable, mysterious way. Ontological reality is a mystery, not a problem; a mystery is revealed directly, a problem is resolved by force of intellect.' We may compare Hopkins' distinction in a letter to Robert Bridges in which he says that to a Catholic a mystery is 'an incomprehensible certainty', whereas to Bridges (and to neo-pagans generally and possibly to all Protestants) it is 'an interesting uncertainty'. We may also compare the slogan of the phenomenologists: 'Life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced' (van der Leeuw). Marcel himself defines a mystery as a problem which invades and overcomes its own data and hence cannot be resolved.

Ruggiero treats Marcel with a certain respect. The Latin takes off his hat to a Latin. But 'the doctrine of Marcel cannot be criticized because it consciously places itself beyond earthly criticism, in *quella zona di penombra delle presenze ineffabili e dei contatti mistici, che richiedono un sesto senso ignoto ai comuni mortali. Chi lo possiede se lo goda*' ('in that twilight region of ineffable presences and mystical contacts, which requires a sixth sense unknown to common mortals. Let him who possesses it enjoy its use'). Marcel is also a dramatist, and Ruggiero thinks but lightly of his plays or at any rate of the existential characters. It is a legitimate criticism of the doctrine, for in the last resort philosophers of existence stand or fall by their biographies.

Kierkegaard is larger than anything that can be said about him. His thought was faithful to his life, and a life cannot be explained away. Neither can it be attacked except by other lives. The chief difference between Kierkegaard and his successors appears to me to be one that Ruggiero has ignored. It is to be

stated in terms of one of the less-known or at any rate less-discussed Kierkegaardian categories, the category of the interesting. It appears to me that all the existentialists I have read or merely heard of have been chiefly concerned to be interesting (perhaps it is the way with all philosophers, for even Whitehead says somewhere that 'it is more important that a proposition be interesting than that it be true'). They have sought to make the sensation of life more acute. They have plotted a philosophical revolution of nihilism for the sake of a *nouveau frisson* and for the sake of the prestige which attends on pessimistic views. They have been occupied not with the *intelligibilia*, not with the discovery of truth, but with the inculcation of attitudes. Before the recent works of Albert Camus, Maurice Blanchot, Georges Bataille and Jean-Paul Sartre come upon us in force, we shall do well to settle Kierkegaard's original *Either—Or* and decide for ourselves whether our judgement of propositions is to be an æsthetic judgement. For the existentialist is a metaphysical æsthete.

What Ruggiero does, after summarizing the doctrines of four existentialists, is to examine their pedigrees. He finds that the chief premise of existentialism, the antithesis between essence and existence and the irreducibility of the second term to the first, was decisively affirmed by Aristotle. He finds that nowhere is there a philosophy so lacking in a principle of individuality as the existentialists pretend. He finds that the problems of existence are sufficiently affirmed by Leibnitz, by Kant, by Hamann,¹ by Jacobi and above all by Schelling, in whose monograph *The Nature of Human Freedom* we find attributed even to God a shadowy, abysmal nature containing a powerful element of the irrational, from which proceeds Jaspers' 'law of the night'.

Existentialism is at its best a periodical reaffirmation of the individual against the impersonal absolute. At its worst, it is a handy rationalization for those who wish to adopt pessimistic conclusions for temperamental motives which they do not declare. It is romantic and irrational at all times, and it has solved no problem, not even its own first-posed. For no account is ever given of the coming to existence of that which exists. '*L'esistenza spunta come un fungo dal piatto terreno del Dasein, o miglio . . . essa emerge come il barone di Münchhausen che, con la forza del braccio, se tira pei capelli dal pantano in cui era affondato.*' ('Existence springs like fungus from the level ground of the Dasein, or better . . . it gets out like Baron von Münchhausen who, with the strength of his own arm, pulls himself by the hair out of the swamp into which he has sunk.')

RAYNER HEPPENSTALL

¹ Incidentally, Kierkegaard's favourite philosopher. It is odd that none of the Kierkegaardians has revived Hamann.

CORRESPONDENCE

Sir,

There is something, don't you think, in the association of ideas? I read Miss Sitwell's review of *Noblesse Oblige*, the little book I wrote in reply to her brother's *A Letter to my Son*, shortly after the correspondence in *The Times* as to the spelling of Toopit, this being the lady in *Martin Chuzzlewit* who, together with Miss Codger, was presented to Mrs. Hominy, 'the Mother of the Modern Gracchi'. Whereupon I turn to my Encyclopædia and read: 'Gracchus is the name of a family of the Gens Sempronia. To this family there attached a remarkable sweet and lovable nature, which, combined with their high character and ability, makes their history the most charming page in the Roman annals.' (I hope I need not stress the resemblance to that modern family of which our best poetess is a distinguished member.) Then back to *Martin Chuzzlewit* and the lady who, in what Miss Sitwell would call the 'nit-wit focus' of my imagination, now appears as the sister of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, the lady who is summed up by Dickens as having a capacity for 'talking deep truths in a melodious snuffle', and an avidity for 'going headlong into moral philosophy at breakfast'. And there, alas, the parallel ends, for whereas Dickens's character vouchsafes little beyond the question to Martin: 'Where was you rose?' and the interjectional 'My! Only think! Do tell!' Miss Sitwell in controversy is a very wordy lady.

Sir, I am inclined to ask where Miss Sitwell was raised that she should fail to understand a little book couched in terms of fourth-form simplicity. In three places only shall I follow her into the morass of muddled thinking she has created for herself. She writes: 'The truth is that Mr. Agate's book is almost unanswerable, because, with the exception of valuable quotations from Baudelaire and Montaigne, it is either sloppily sentimental or just plumb silly. Usually it is both, as when on page eleven, he writes: "I say that the *soil itself* is worth living and dying for." This *sounds* very beautiful. But otherwise there is no distinction to be found between this statement and one of Mr. Noel Coward's later songs. Mr. Agate ought to write poems for Mothers' Day.' Now shall we have the actual quotation on page eleven of my book? 'I find Osbert Sitwell writing: "A country is worth dying for, as it is worth living for, because of the flowers its soil produces". And I say that the SOIL ITSELF is worth living and dying for.' Does Miss Sitwell really suppose her brother to be willing to die for a bedding-out plant, while I prefer to die for the earth in which it is bedded? One would have thought that an eminent poetess would recognize a metaphor when she saw one, while elementary logic suggests that if one passage is sloppily sentimental or plumb silly the other must be equally so.

And now for my second quotation from Miss Sitwell: 'It is enough to aggravate a saint to hear Mr. Agate suggesting that "the old pal" wishes a young man to be excused military service "because he has composed an unintelligible poem or painted a picture of three sardines swimming in a top-hat and called 'Barcarolle'". Who suggested this? It is a great impertinence to a writer of Osbert Sitwell's calibre to impute such a suggestion to him.' Now, sir, I conceive with difficulty that there is a subject about which at least one of today's Gracchi does not know everything. But I submit that if there

is such a subject, it will certainly have nothing to do with art. In the very issue in which Miss Sitwell's article appears, you reproduce some paintings by Picasso. One of these shows a man with only one eye, and with the whole of his mouth to the right of his nose, while the left side of his face is featureless. I have no criticism to make of this picture, any more than I have praise or blame for a 'portrait' I saw yesterday of a man with his left eye in the middle of his right cheek two inches below his right eye and his left ear within an eighth of an inch of his left nostril. I see no reason why artists of this kind should not have begun by painting sardines swimming in top-hats. And surely Sir Osbert Sitwell, in his claim that artists should be exempt from conscription, must include the immature and potential artist. (And who can be conscious of his potentialities except the immature young man himself?) Obviously Sir Osbert must wish to exempt not only the successful Dylan Thomases and Henry Treeces, but every budding poet who has had three lines accepted in the highbrow magazines? Not only the Benjamin Brittens and Edmund Rubbras, but the cacophonist of tender years starting his tone-poem 'Berceuse' with the chord of F, F sharp, G sharp, A sharp, and C sharp in the right hand and G A B C D and D sharp in the left. Is it thought that the left-hand combination infeasible? Try striking C and D with the thumb and D sharp with the first finger. There are at least two other ways, but I am becoming too technical.

Finally Miss Sitwell makes me suggest that her brother cares nothing about the agony and death of the ordinary man in battle. This shows that the lady had read my book piecemeal without grasping it as a whole. The argument is as follows: Let it be conceded that the state of ecstasy—spiritual, emotional, intellectual—is the highest state known to man, and that the first function of the artist is to create ecstasy. I make the obvious point that ecstasy occasioned by art can be experienced only by those who have some understanding of art, say five per cent of the human race, after which I go on to point out that ninety-five per cent of the public is raised above itself to the only ecstasy it knows about by non-artists of all kinds—cricketers, footballers, boxers, jockeys and so forth. (Do not let us be led away by the picturesque obfuscation of some such phrase as 'Woolley's off-drive shows the Kent cricketer to be a great artist'.) And this follows: 'Then why should we not exempt all stargazers, climbers, archæologists, doctors, ploughmen, cobblers, engineers, architects, town-planners, city surveyors, house agents, barristers, professors, teachers, and all others who, endowed with their particular "spiritual essence", can communicate it by precept or example, each after his own kind? If you are going to quibble with me in the clever modern way, and say that those who are not æsthetically moved cannot be spiritually minded, I would say to you this: the lout who is moved by the foot-work of some centre-forward to something above his normal emotions, who is raised by this pass or that goal the tiniest fraction above the self that he normally knows, is as much spiritually moved as the man of more complicated—I will not say finer—grain who is raised above himself by the Kreutzer Sonata. What follows? This, my dear son: *If the artist is to be exempt from the common obligation, then every man who does for simple people what the artist does for the elite is exempt also.*' And I conclude with the statement that 'Sir Osbert's

policy of exemption, if carried to its logical conclusion, must result, *though he may not realize it and obviously would not desire it* [italics for the purpose of this letter to you, sir], in the sacrifice of greater numbers of the ordinary man. And sacrifice in a lost war, since no country which exempts the best of its doers as well as thinkers can hope to prevail against a nation fighting as one man.'

This is the argument which, Miss Sitwell may like to know, the *Manchester Guardian* in a leading article held to be 'in the main right', while Sir Osbert Sitwell's argument was held to be 'in the main wrong'.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES AGATE

THE LITERARY SITUATION IN FRANCE

To the Editor of HORIZON

I DO not want to throw any doubt on the general veracity of the article by Philip Toynbee in your November issue, which I have just seen. He evidently wrote it under pressure, and aimed at supplying the maximum of information in the time.

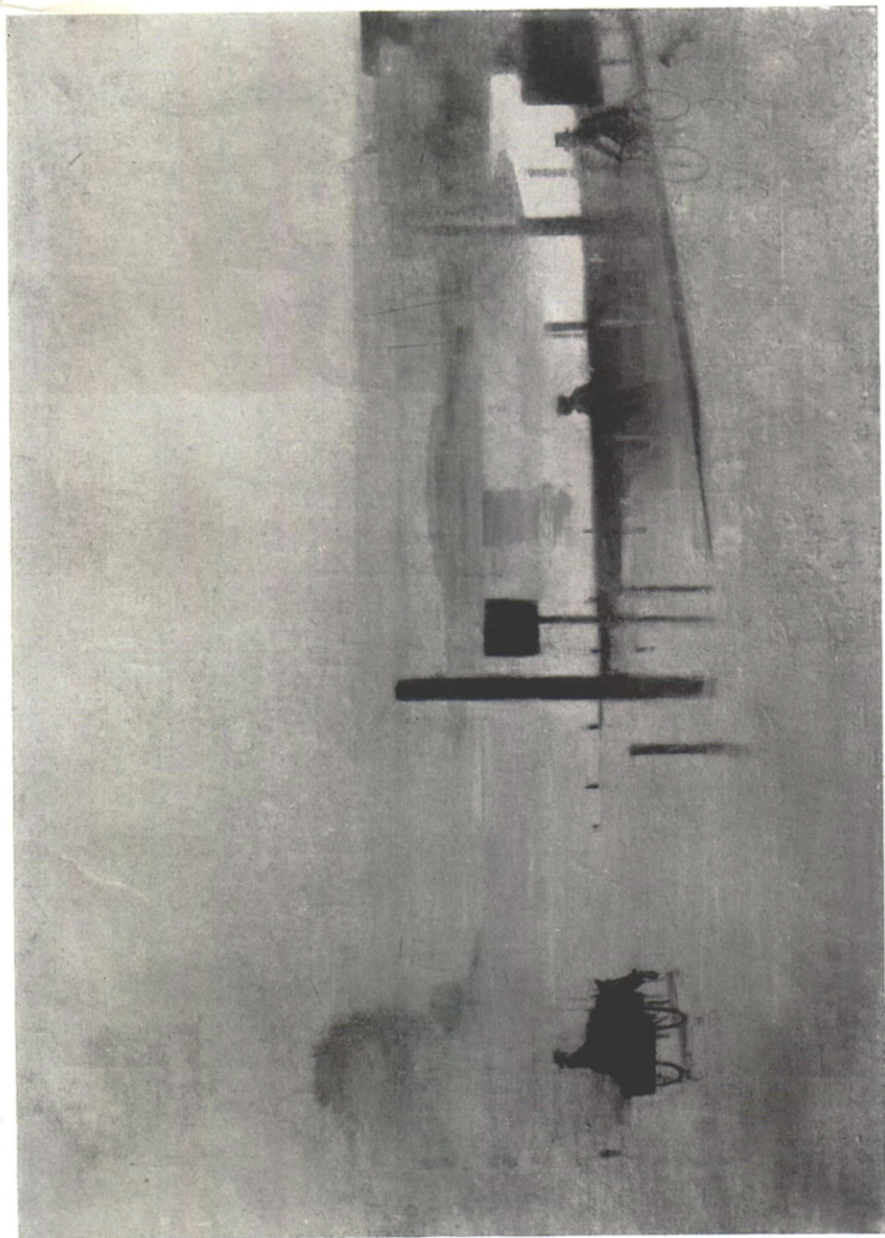
But *Le Solstice de Juin* by Henry de Montherlant (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1941), which he calls a novel, is in fact a collection of essays. A glance at the table of contents is enough to prevent any mistake, and he cannot have seen the book. It may accordingly be asked how is he able so confidently to assert that *Le Solstice de Juin* is 'the most expressly pro-Nazi of all the literary works which have appeared under the [German] occupation'?

Montherlant in these essays simply displays himself a French Kipling. He extols physical and moral strength, being proud, having tenacity of purpose, keeping a stiff upper lip, and carrying out as well as possible any job once begun. This is exactly what Kipling extolled. Does Mr. Toynbee wish to have the audacity to suggest that such ideals are exclusively or peculiarly Nazi? In one or two footnotes Montherlant points out that certain criticisms of French life at the time he was writing apply only to life in the unoccupied area, not to life in the occupied area. But a reader has indeed to be naïve to imagine that the insertion of those footnotes was necessarily dictated by admiration of National Socialism.

Altogether, then, it is perhaps not so very surprising that Montherlant in September last was still, as Mr. Toynbee insinuatingly puts it, 'at large'.

I may add that Montherlant is no friend or acquaintance of mine. But I hope I shall always protest, and shall always be allowed to protest, against the gratuitous denigration of an eminent writer.

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